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No. 1 MARCH 1985

Matilda

CURRENT AFFAIRS • HUMOUR • SATIRE

READING
BETWEEN
THE LINES



Leunig

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BY MICHAEL LEUNIG

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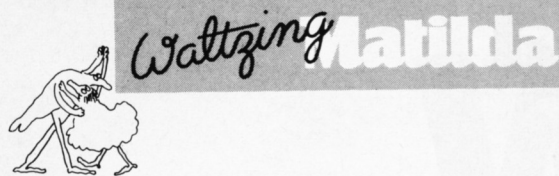
Matilda

CURRENT AFFAIRS • HUMOUR • SATIRE

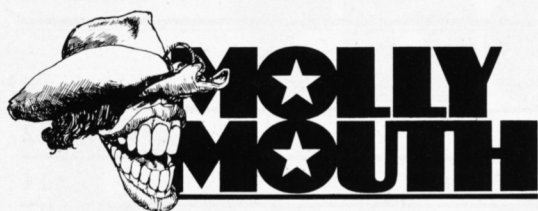
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Matilda cannot be all seeing and all hearing and therefore welcomes authentic foot-in-mouth contributions for which we'll reward you (if we use them and if you're the first to get them to us) with a crisp ten dollar note. Send your offerings to Mollymouth, P.O. Box 307, Kiama 2533.



You can't walk on water with feet of clay without losing your stature.

Andrew Peacock.

The only way Australia can be beaten is if they beat themselves.

Gordon Bray.

You've got to be where the ball is to take the catch.

Max Walker.

I am sick and bloody tired of having my name dropped like confetti by people trying to push their own barrows.

Neville Wran.

Canberra is fast becoming the political capital of Australia.

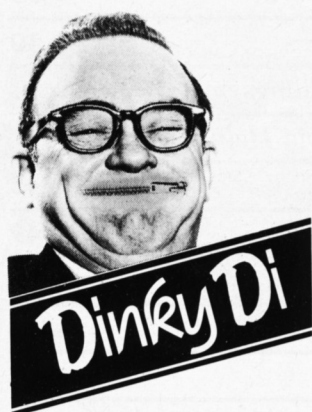
ABC reporter introducing Matilda Editor.

Tennis requires a lot of lateral movement and for that reason it's smaller for the easier man to do that.

John Newcombe.

I just had to show you a little bit of what you're about to see.

Ian 'Molly' Meldrum.



DAVE MOORE, the 29-year-old former Queensland policeman currently facing charges of unlawfully and indecently assaulting boys under the age of 16, was probably the most popular and widely recognised member of

the Queensland police department's public relations branch before his resignation last November. His job involved the handling of a crime prevention campaign and lecturing to Queensland school children about such things as "stranger danger". He also appeared on a number of children's television shows where his role was to advise on safety issues for children.

Of course, it's now old news that BILL HURREY – the ABC radio announcer in Brisbane is also facing charges involving boys. But goodness gracious me, now I hear that JOH and his men are more than a trifle worried about a politician, his predilections

and the gossip. Seems to be causing a few heart flutters in the Deep North.

It excited my correspondent in Brisbane so much that he wrote of pillars of society – the legal fraternity, the media, sportsmen, the political society – being involved in a procurement, photography/pornography, shock, horror, scandal ring. Goodness gracious me.

I hear that all is not well with the Australian Institute of Political Science, an organisation advertised as being "an independent body... not connected with any political party".

Recent times have seen the resignation of three directors in Victoria (Senator Gareth Evans, Race Mathews and Dr. Jocelyne Scutt), leaving the Melbourne branch dominated by members or would be members of the Liberal Parliamentary Party, and technicians of the Fraser years. So I suppose it comes as no surprise to find that Malcolm is to be given a platform from which to make a new run for the Liberal Party leadership – that being a seminar organised by the AIPS to be held at the Melbourne Arts Centre in July/August 1985.

The subject? The highly party-political states' rights question. Fraser's fellow speakers? Such illustrious names as John Elliott, Hugh Morgan, John Stone and Robin Gray.

Young Malcolm's role will be that of "summing up", an exacting role filled at past conferences by Professor Ronald Sackville, Dr. Peter Willenski and Dr. Anne Summers, each renowned for flair, oratorical ability and intellectual standing – strange bedfellows indeed.

Makes me wonder how long the "independence" of the Institute can be touted.

America sure is a lively little place. Statistics passed onto old Dinky Di show that in one day:

- Almost 6,000 teenagers have sexual intercourse for the first time.
- Some 2,200 Americans discover they have cancer.
- They throw out 2,000,000 tonnes of garbage.

• Two American public officers are indicted on charges of corruption.

• Dogs bite 20 postpeople.

• Two hundred women have their breasts enlarged, 90 have their breasts reduced, and a total of 35 have their breasts lifted or aimed in some other direction.

• Sixty people desert the military and almost 200 go AWOL.

Young GERALDINE, young GERALDINE, my poor little fingers are worked to the bone updating gossip about you. Have a heart, darling, use your very good relations with ABC's IAN CARROLL to get THE NATIONAL really rolling and keep your name out of the crowd I mix with.

I heard about your personal difficulties from an ABC News journalist – you'll be horrified to hear. And then it was your producer fellow IAN CARROLL, who came in for it next. And this was from one of those odious advertising people! Yes GERALDINE, he muttered something of some of the chaps at the ABC gossiping about the overtime that both IAN and you were said to be doing.

Then the wretch talked about Ian's separation from his wife last year and friendship with JUDI STACK, La Stupenda of the ABC Secretariat, reputedly the second-most-powerful person in the ABC after GEOFFREY WHITEHEAD.

But keep above it all darling. After all, it's only human to pursue happiness. I'll try to have some more good advice next month.

I picked it up from the Canberra Times who picked it up from someone else, but I'll print it in the interests of toilet humour.

WHEN a petrol thief tried his "craft" from a parked campervan in New Zealand recently he got a higher octane than he bargained for. A couple arose in the morning to find that someone had been sick beside the van and a hose was hanging from one of the tanks – the portable septic tank.

Oscar Wilde would have been enchanted with the flower button holes sported by all the guests at the party given by Greek Ambassador Alexander Bayenas and his wife Frolica, who is as pretty and charming as her name suggests.

By using four flower varieties - pink roses, white daisies, blue hydrangeas and orange marigolds they divided guests into teams for a duplicate bridge tournament.

What, with illustrious guests and icy brandy Alexanders plied by the butler it was a happy occasion.

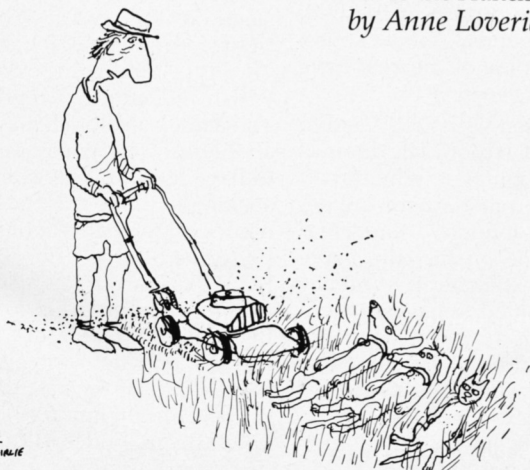
The host put me into a slam contract in hearts against the formidable opposition of Talat Husain wife of the Pakistan Ambassador and Major General Laurie O'Donnell. The General has been posted to take over Eastern Command. His fetching, blond wife June is excited about living in the beautiful old house in Victoria Barracks.

Other players and stayers at the party which went on into the witching hours included that decorative pair Dr Enrico Taglietti and Francesca who must surely be one of the most elegant women here. Wearing timeless black and white she added an old Victorian muff chain from which hung her lorgnette.

At the end of play at the Greek Embassy Frolica presented prizes to the winning team and I scored a beaded leather belt.

As we left I said to the Ambassador and host "See you at tennis on Sunday".

"No, I will be away," he replied.



"Oh, anywhere interesting?"

"The South Pole" he answered with the same non-chalance of a housewife off to the Fyshwick markets.

Held in the garden of the Chancery, the nature of the farewell party for the Dean of the Australian diplomatic corps, Sir Laurie Francis and his clever, artist wife Heather, attested to the popularity of the couple.

VIPs galore nibbled on the delicious NZ food; mussels nestling in silvery shells, lobsters succulent in cases and other titbits.

We arrived with Sir Harold and Lady White

Lovely Lucia Carresse, wife of the Charge D'Affairs of Uruguay sparkled in emerald green hung with chains. One of the pendants held a lucky bean her mother found washed up on the Atlantic seaboard. Another held a modernistic version of her country's coat of arms.

A large group surrounded former Labor politician Fred Daly, who was escorting his daughter Margaret. Fred and Sir Laurie are both a familiar sight at the National Press Club. They share a penchant for the pokie machine.

Congratulations galore for beautiful blonde, Anna Merimee, wife of the French Ambassador, who has been named one of the country's ten best dressed women.

Anna and Jean Bernard did not stay long, positively flew back to their Embassy high on the hill overlooking the lake to do a quick change into black tie and full ball gown bit to host a dinner dance as a farewell to the Francis.

by Anne Loveridge

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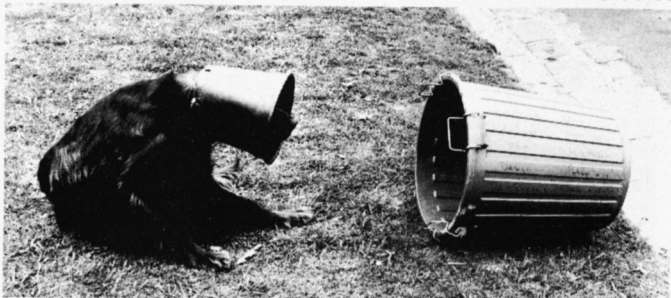
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DOGHOUSE PET OF THE MONTH

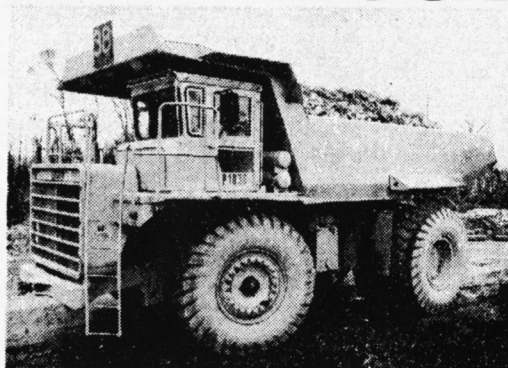
His master's voice



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R. J. HARVEY, Secretary, G.P.O. Box 355D, HOBART, TAS. 7001

Life's tough in the Southwest these days...



*They were lighting up
the candles*

*Up there round
Queensland way,
Cause Joh Bjelke
Petersen was 74 that
day.*

*There across the
border he's the man they
think they need,*

*The man once voted
back in school most
likely to secede.*

*The man who fought
the unions, on crises
stood alone,*

*The man who made it
somewhere Queen
Victoria could call home.*

*The man who saw the
nation's wealth and
promptly up and sold it,*

*The man who's
turning Surfers to a neon
flashing Colditz,*

*A man who's worked
for years to achieve his
great design,*

*And given just a little
time, restore the
Brisbane Line...*

*To steal a march on
those today who wish
him luck and health*

*I'd like to say I've
long admired his open-
handed stealth.*

*The fact that he will
still go on gives
Nationals much relief,*

*And if they strike oil
off the coast he'll outlast
the Barrier Reef.*

by Jim Pike.



WANDA ROXOFF

Is actress Greta Scacchi the Yoko Ono of the now defunct Split Enz? Well may you ask. Perhaps that's placing too much importance on the immigrant Aussie girl from 'Heat and Dust'?

A little known fact about the band's ending is that lead singer Tim Finn is a true romantic. He went to Europe to promote his successful solo album 'Escapade', fell in love with Greta and told the folks back home the gig was off.

Between films he's in domestic bliss in his deco house in Melbourne's 'Borscht Belt' suburb of Caulfield where he and Greta are often seen carousing in his immaculate black Zephyr car. Musical differences were officially cited as a reason for the band's 'Breakage'.

Never mind, their demise is only a faint memory now that the stampede from the Northern Hemisphere has begun.

When the snow is falling (we're talking weather here) in the United Kingdom and America, rest assured that the big names of rock music will be clambering to tour the sunny spots of Australia. They're thick on the ground at the moment and Australia is starting to look like a rest and recreation convention centre. The names started appearing early and will go right through to March and April when the dirtiest of the U.S. rock legends, Neil Young lands. Some of the best have already been.

It started with Eric 'Used to be God' Clapton. The diminutive Brit guitarist, who ran off with George Harrison's wife, looked tanned, slim and handsome on his trip, especially next to Brett Whiteley who seemed to have gone on tour with the group as he did with buddies Dire Straits in the past. Does this mean he'll do the next album cover?

But old 'slow hand' Clapton certainly hasn't lost his touch.

His craftsmanship made an interesting comparison with little known U.S. guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan when he recently packed concert halls around the country. If Eric and Stevie didn't draw the hippies from the woods then Van Morrison will when he arrives this month.

And if you missed John Rotten and Public Image Limited in December, frankly, you deserve an hour with Tom Jones. Rotten, with all the confidence of a sex pistol who used to vomit on airline passengers and all the charm of a brick wall, although somewhat pudgier, glared down at his Melbourne audience and said 'You'll take what you get and be grateful'. It seems a head banger at the front asked him to play 'I still call Australia Home' (or is it by 'phone).

Likewise, Lou Reed, 42 (the man who late in life discovered real women) has completed his stint in the sun. 'I don't answer anything that has to do with my personal life,' says Lou. Now, also off alcohol and men, we're predicting that on his next tour Lou's great quote will be 'I want to be left alone'.

And the hits kept coming. Who wears tight green cords, black leggings on top, a Hawaiian shirt, a red beret and long thinning hair on stage in the 1980s? You're right, former Eagle, Joe 'It's A "Rocky Mountain Way"' Walsh. Defying anything Yama moto or Borich may say about fashion, Walsh seems to have found his style and is sticking to it. He was the only man in tight pants when he performed with 'The Party Boys' a casual outfit which, on this tour featured Oz Rock's Big Boy, Marc Hunter and Kevin Borich. The band played 'Life in the Fast Lane', 'Rocky Mountain Way' and 'Life's Been Good to Me'. Walshy gave it his all.

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About the remarkable Japan holiday rail-pass you can organise right now. And much much more.

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And there are more worldly reasons to fly JAL too. Did you know JAL's fleet of Jumbos is the world's most advanced? And will shortly be the world's largest. Touching down somewhere in the world about every 4 minutes.

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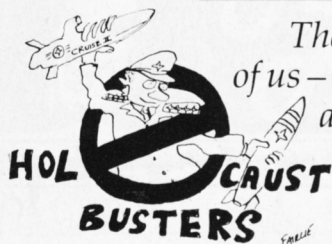
It's always a pleasure



JAPAN AIR LINES



Wattzing Matilda



There won't be many of us – or them – left to gather around the table.

D. H. Hackworth

No one can win a nuclear war. But will the top brass accept this reality and admit it to the politicians? Will the politicians find a new way to resolve conflict between nations without resorting to force?

History shouts "No!" But if we are to stave off the nuclear winter, if the human race is to survive at all, we must continue to demand that our leaders work for us to change our future history's course, to preserve the best of our past, and to stop the march to an un-winnable war.

Modern warfare is as obsolete as the horse and buggy. It contains "the germs of double suicide," as MacArthur said in 1955. Yet, soldiers who advise politicians are reluctant to understand this truth.

It's not that they're slow learners – but their conservative minds always cause them to fight today's wars with yesterday's thinking. Remember Flander's Field? Singapore? The tragedy of Vietnam?

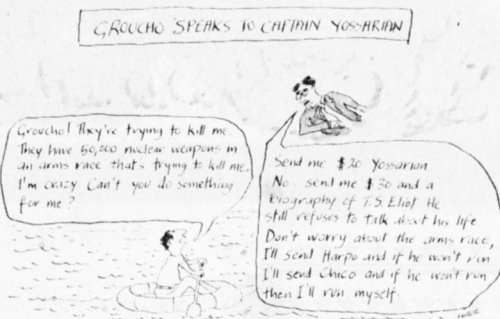
From Haig to Percival to Westmoreland, soldiers have not got it right the first time – and with nuclear weapons there are no second chances.

War has only one purpose and that's to win. The spoils are secondary. Politicians unleash their warriors when negotiation fails, and their military advisers, the generals, welcome this breakdown of diplomacy. Under the banner of patriotism they even encourage it, so military solutions can be employed and they can add to their own power and glory.

War equals money. It brings home the bacon for the Military Industrial Complex, a greedy group blind to the reality that modern nuclear weapons will irradiate that bacon charcoal-black, and

there won't be many of us – or them – left to gather around the table.

Around the world, top scientists like Carl Sagan are saying that if a mere 500 nuclear warheads were exploded simultaneously, our civilisation would be destroyed in a fiery inferno which, paradoxically, will usher in an ice age.



Smoke, soot and ash will block the sun, and a nuclear winter will cover the burned ruins of humankind.

Currently the Superpowers alone have over 50,000 nuclear weapons. All sitting in silos, bombers, launchers and submarines – on a hair trigger – waiting for an order to fire, or a miscalculation, accident or computer error to send them on their way. By 1990 this figure will be over 70,000.

It's trendy to be a nuclear power. China and India each have atomic devices, and they have a hard time even feeding all their people. At least a score of smaller nations either have the Bomb or will have quietly built it within a decade. Useless weapons, wasted money and resources; no one can win a nuclear war.

Deterrence is an insane game. It could be called Atomic Catch 22. Even its author, former US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara, says it has seen its day – it should be retired immediately, like a game of Scrabble

which has lost half its titles, so we can get on with our Trivial Pursuits.

In the meantime, who's in charge of those Scrabble titles – all those suicidal weapons, East and West? Not politicians. Not generals. This final military solution has been entrusted to silicon chips. Today computers are in charge of our fate. Launch-to-target is measured in minutes: ten minutes for a West German-based US Pershing II to strike Moscow; six minutes for a warhead to impact Washington DC or Canberra from a Soviet submarine – smart nuclear missiles that can, after flying thousands of miles, strike within a few football fields of their targets.

Humans are too slow and unreliable to handle these

accurate deadly weapon systems, some of which can travel up to 10,000 mph.

The tight compression of time has moved both sides closer to a launch on warning posture. Very soon there will be no margin for error. Mere minutes will not allow time to distinguish between a flight of geese or a radar aberration, and the real thing.

Even satellites, those all-seeing eyes in the sky will not avert a calamity, which is as assured as the ever-advancing missile technology.

★★★★★★★★★★★★

Hold the Steroids

Ronald Reagan is the patriarch of a mostly meat-eating family (daughter Patti Davis is a vegetarian) and even with his busy job in Washington, the President still finds time to provide freshly butchered beef to his kin. But Reagan's beef is not quite the same as everyone else's.

First, calves are carefully selected from a breeding facility in Southern California's Canejo Valley. They are then raised on the President's own ranch near Santa Barbara.

When the steers are grown, the President's personal butcher, Bruce Oxford of Harmony Farms, dispatches a truck from Thousand Oaks, California, to Santa Barbara, where the cattle are slaughtered. They are then loaded onto the truck and shipped to Oxford's plant to be cut and wrapped for distribution to the Reagan clan. At an appointed (and secret) time the Secret Service comes to Harmony Farms to pick up the White House portion.

But why Harmony Farms? Why don't the Reagans just buy their beef from Safeway? The only thing that distinguishes the T-bones on your plate from those on the Reagans' is that all their beef are raised without the use of hormones or anabolic steroids.

Long before athletes discovered the wonder of steroids, cattle and chicken feeders had been injecting their animals with a variety of hormones and steroids, including Diethylstilbestrol (DES), testosterone, estradiol, and progesterone – simply to add pounds.

The problem with steroids is that residues stay in the meat of the animal, and some



of the steroids still used are suspected of causing cancer.

For the past 25 years, controversy has raged through the Food and Drug Administration and the Agriculture Department over whether or not cattle growers should be allowed to fatten their animals with steroids.

Nutritionists and health advocates say they should be banned. Cattle breeders and feeders say they are safe. And Reagan, despite his own preference for what he calls "old-fashioned, home-grown beef," sides with the cattle growers.

But for those unlucky enough not have a natural beef outlet in their neighbourhoods – or to be unrelated to the Reagans – well... let them eat steroids.



SHEILA MARALINGA



Well, folks welcome to the wonder-world of the world's most charismatic people. No prizes for guessing the World's Most Charismatic politician.

World's Most Charismatic megastar — Helen Apricot, who on her recent tour to guide the peace and disarmament movement to new levels of horror and despair, wanted to know where the safest place in Australia was located in the event of nuclear war.

WMC pop star — Senator Hopeful Chrome Dome, who thinks that Australian studios may not be ideologically sound for his albums, is on a promotional tour of USA and will meet with other superstars to discuss how megalomania

has helped the peace movement.

WMC Nobel Peace Prize nomination — Little Willie for attempting to keep the peace on peace in the ALP.

Militant-Lesbian-Feminist-Trotskyist-Leninist-Stalinist-Extremist Boo Award to Women for Life and Preservation (whose recent peace train was a series of buses) for an exhibition entitled 'A slip of the tongue' — an exhibition of lesbian images for women only.

Have an ideologically-sound, cosmically-purifying (and sending you lots of positive energy) month with your Range Rover, jacuzzi, and the kids at the farm.

Until next month, love and of course, peace, Sheila.



Heavens Above

BY LILI STARPERSON

Lili Rochas is a herbalist, writer, active pacifist and social gadabout – a red-headed Aries with the moon in Klutz.

So, you've survived till 1985. Quite frankly, it wasn't worth the effort. Now you can look forward to 14 years of political cataclysms, crumbling governments, virulent mystery plagues, wrath-of-god rains and cities filled with drug-crazed runaways.

Pluto, in Scorpio for the significant sum of 13 years, ushers in an era of karma drama: war, depressions, infectious epidemics, ecological catastrophes (the second coming of the Crown of Thorns will deliver the coup de grace to the Barrier Reef), entertainment continuing to be provided by après-nuclear videoclips and rock bands called Corpse Grinders, Exploited Scumbags From Hell, Scraping Fetus Off Wheel and Dead Boy In My Lap.

And of course, there's Halley's Comet, at present somewhere beyond the orbit of Jupiter, growing ever brighter as it nears its rendezvous with the sun. (Throughout history the appearance of comets have coincided with times of crisis, blood and thunder, vast disasters, rack and ruin.)

All good meaty stuff. Great configurations for radical regeneration and for new spiritual mutants to rise up from the ashes. For the self-obsessed and those desperate for more specific celestial assistance, apply the following. *Bonne chance.*



ARIES: With Mars and Venus, deities of love and violence, jointly present in the sign of hotheads, anyone wearing red underwear is courting coccyx shock. Expect bedroom brawls and embarrassing accidents.



TAURUS: Due to the influence of Saturn the Great Stabilizer, you may find your normal urge to inaction bordering on the catatonic. Not that this will strike anyone as remarkable.



GEMINI: Hey, hey sweet twins, you're quick – Mercury sees to that – but Uranus implies you're about to be

indiscreet to the point of madness. You'll be lucky to escape by the skin of your wit.



CANCER: Moon people are creatures of many moods, this month most of the moods are trying, since Neptune, Lord of the waters, has it in for you. Those born in this sign don't usually give up easily. You should try.



LEO: You could come to power this month. But once you're lord of all, you dismay. Try not to abuse your position as did another under your sign (called Mussolini).



VIRGO: Oh vanity, thy name is Virgo! Why keep trying to make fools out of people? You won't improve on nature. Things being what they are, you'd do well to remember that nobody likes a smart-ass.



LIBRA: The famous Libran inability to say "No" may be misconstrued this month. You'll be hotly pursued by two-legged problems and could easily lose a limb before Venus has her way. Fight back.



SCORPIO: Pleasure won't be plentiful this month since your taste in amusement is, to say the least, curious. Little wonder you bring out the latent long-distance runner in the objects of your (is it?) affection.



SAGITTARIUS: If you get a funny feeling that things are closing in on you, it will be because things are, in fact, closing in on you. On closer inspection you'll find things aren't as bad as they seem. They're worse.



CAPRICORN: Goats have never been famous for sustained hilarity of spirits – a pity really, a sense of humour would have been a help right now. Don't for a moment suppose everything's under control. It's not by a long shot.

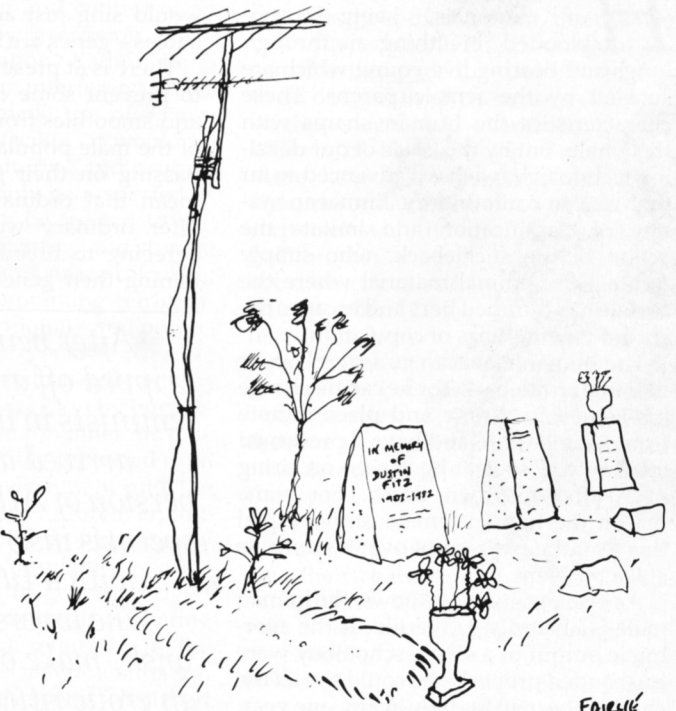


AQUARIUS: Well, well water-pourers – the future's looking pretty rosy,

wouldn't you say? Sun and Jupiter with you, even your most bent and far-fetched schemes will succeed. This month you're the world's sweetheart, the people's choice. Enjoy while it lasts.

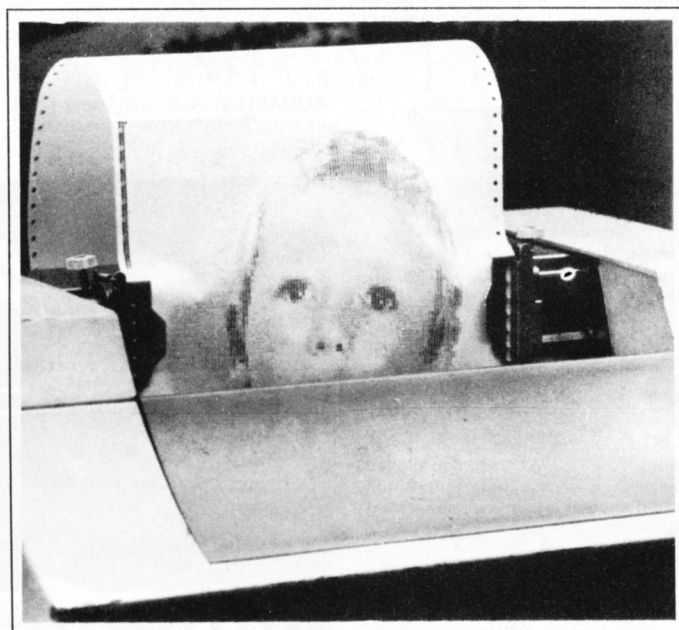


PISCES: Mercury makes sure no-one with half a brain would trust you this month with a good-looking rat, but unless you fancy rats, why worry? You'll find many humans prepared to consider a few vices if they're presented in an entertaining manner.



SEX AND SURROGACY

by Germaine Greer



No latter-day aspect of procreation has attracted greater attention from the authorities than has artificial insemination. According to Germaine Greer, the only way to stay out of the toils of shysterism and professional arrogance is to take the preservation and control of one's own fertility into one's own hands.

Human beings belong to the order of mammals, being warm-blooded, breathing air through lungs and bearing live young which are suckled by the female parent. These characteristics the human shares with the whale, but by the grace of our dazzling technology, we have advanced so far that we can confound the Linnaean system of classification and imitate the action of the stickleback, who simply dumps his seminal material where the female has dumped hers and escapes the sordid togetherness of copulation.

The human male can go several better than the stickleback, for he can discharge his semen in a time and place remote from fecundation, and have it preserved indefinitely, so that he can go on siring even after his own death. For some reason the human female cannot equal this feat; the freezing of ova, it seems, is still a problem.

As every schoolboy knows, the human male is absurdly too fertile. If the spermatic output of a single schoolboy were husbanded properly, he could sire all the children born in Sydney in any one year. Other males would have to beg, borrow or steal their reproductive opportunity.

By banding together, women could

nominate the year's stud and decide the child vintage for the year. 1985 could be Placido Domingo year, with Bob Hawke bringing up, if you'll pardon the expression, the rear. (The Bob Hawke babies would sing just as well as the Placido babies – genes are tricky little bastards.)

There is at present no legal machinery to prevent some conspiracy of women and smoothies from depriving the mass of the male population of any chance of passing on their genes. This ought to mean that ordinary men will have to offer ordinary women a fair deal of agreeing to breed by them instead of joining their genes with those of some

After being exposed, ripped off and humiliated, feminists in the United States arrived at their own version of AID in which fresh sperm is inserted in the vagina with a turkey baster.

The lovers can, if they wish, make of this procedure an erotic ritual and no earthly authority can interfere with them.

superstar, but actually it means anything but that.

It is an axiom of sociobiology that all living creatures, man included, are driven by a need to pass on their genes. Some species, man included, are reproductive opportunists, seeking to maximise

their chances of successful transmission by fornication, adultery and rape. In the bad old days, the children of priests sat by working men's fires and the working men's wives congratulated themselves on having combined their genes with those of a more successful line. The squire who lingered by the stile with the milkmaid was pleased to produce a hybrid of his etiolated strain and a more robust one. Monarchs named their by-blows Dukes of This and Marquesses of That. Nowadays the method they adopted would be called NID, natural insemination by donor.

You might have thought, now that adultery has become a parlour game for bored couples, that this cheap and effective method of overcoming a husband's sterility would be at least as popular as ever, and perhaps it is. An experiment involving a sample of Families from Birmingham in 1974, had to be abandoned after a preliminary scan of blood groupings in the families selected showed that nearly a third of the children could not have been sired by their mothers' husbands.

Surrogate fathering has been around for a long time; unfortunately improved techniques of genetic analysis now make it possible for all children and not just the wise ones to know their own fathers. Women shall soon lose their one opportunity to practise genetic sabotage.

Resort to Artificial Insemination by Donor, Called AID (and actually another way of transmitting AIDS) is only necessary when a couple is revolted by the element of "criminal conversation" involved in NID (adultery). The method has a number of drawbacks; unless it is offered by a public health authority, it is likely to be costly but, in any case, it exposes the couple to the scrutiny of authoritarian institutions.

On the spurious grounds of public accountability, the medical establishment agrees to 'evaluate' candidates for infertility treatments of this kind. It would be unethical to produce offspring for couples who were incapable of guaranteeing the child a happy life and a good upbringing. The first people to run into this obstructive *ad hoc* moralism were homosexual women, who preferred AID because enforced genital contact with males struck them as a squalid and antipathetic beginning for an important relationship.

After being exposed, ripped off and humiliated, feminists in the United States arrived at their own version of AID in which fresh sperm is inserted in the vagina with a turkey baster. The lovers can, if they wish, make of this procedure an erotic ritual and no earthly authority can interfere with them.

Infertile people do not have this option; if they develop a passionate desire to pass on their genes, or set their hearts on 'having a baby' they must have recourse to haphazard evaluation procedures. Then, if they are deemed suitable cases, they agree to put themselves through painful, time-consuming and expensive medical and surgical treatments, which are still attended by high failure rates. The doctors who choose to specialise in infertility tell us that they do so because they are so deeply moved by the unspeakable misery of childless couples (as long as they are not homosexual couples).

It has never been suggested that in the cultural milieu of the western world in the 1980's deep misery about childlessness is irrational, possibly neurotic or obsessive and therefore a bad prognosis for parenting. Nor has anyone spared a thought for the poor nippers who are so relentlessly planned and consciously formed. The weight of scrutiny and expectation on their small shoulders could well drive them under the house with the glue bag.

The tear-jerking speeches about the heartbreak of infertility are strikingly at variance with the general medical attitude toward fertility, which is to regard it as an inconvenience of which most people seek to be disencumbered. If infertility is so dreadful, why do we make no attempt whatever to teach young people how fragile fertility is? Most of the infertility that specialists see

is secondary infertility. The patients were fertile once and are so no longer. Most of them have been rendered infertile by doctors; infertility specialists spend more time trying to reverse tubal ligation, tubectomy and vasectomy than in all other procedures. Their success rate is still low, which is not surprising, seeing as their colleagues risk malpractice suits if they don't make certain that the devastation is complete at the time of sterilisation.

The few doctors who are capable of abstract thought have grasped that this situation is hardly ethical. A doctor cannot cut off my leg simply because I take a dislike to it, and he certainly cannot then charge me a king's ransom for trying vainly to put it back on again. But he can cut, fry, tie and electrocoagulate my Fallopian tubes or my vas, and then spend up to four hours trying to undo his handiwork by microsurgery under deep anaesthesia, earning a massive fee all the while.



The man who gives his seminal material into the keeping and control of an institution is hardly exercising maximum self-determination. Rather, he is courting authoritarian interference in his affairs. Even if he made use of a completely commercial facility, it would be subject to state monitoring and control. His privacy would only be respected as far as computers can be trusted to respect it. The costs of freezing and storage for long periods are difficult to calculate; the necessity for maintaining refrigeration through war, earthquake and power-cut would require expensive override precautions which could hardly be carried out without supervision by bureaucratic authorities. The container must be radiation proof, and duly protected from mutagens in the environment and the possibility of sabotage. Moreover, the custodians of the facility would certainly be interested in accumulating sperms with different kinds of genetic endowments and the possibility of exploiting the material without reference to the donors' wishes, especially if a situation arose in which the only sperm which had escaped a mutagenic catastrophe (e.g. a nuclear attack) was in the sperm bank.

It is obvious too that a sperm donor

could not have access to his sperm whenever he felt like it; he and the dam of his choice would have to be evaluated before artificial insemination with his own sperm would be deemed 'an appropriate medical treatment'.

Female infertility presents a series of different problems. The most common cause is tubal occlusion, either deliberately caused by surgery, or the result of sexually transmitted or pelvic inflammatory or other diseases. A woman whose tubes are missing or blocked produces mature ova which are simply reabsorbed. They can be harvested and fecundated in the laboratory and the resulting blastocyst implanted in the prepared uterus. Most of the eggs fertilised during unprotected intercourse never succeed in implanting and are simply lost at menstruation, but no-one has ever protested at this wastage, or called upon the medical profession to develop ways of stopping it or demanded that religious people baptise sanitary napkins. Most blastocysts die unrecorded, disregarded. Only the tiny minority sitting in petri dishes or liquid nitrogen can call themselves celebrities.

A woman selected for IVF (in vitro fertilisation) treatment is dosed with hormones so that she over-ovulates, and several ova are fertilised at once. The best-looking one (or four or six or eight if the surgeon is a self-seeking fool) is selected for implantation. The others may be put on ice in case the implantation doesn't take; the collection of ova is neither so pleasant nor so easy that it can be repeated *ad libitum*.

This is where the trouble starts. Mr and Mrs Rios died leaving their blastocysts suspended in liquid nitrogen. The sensible thing to do would be to take them out and flush them down the sink, so that they would eventually join the trillions of blastocysts in limbo. Alas, these little fellows are both rich and famous so that ass, the law, has to concern itself with their rights. A rapacious half brother waits to inherit. Rios has been vasectomised, so it is not clear whether the blastocysts can be considered his heirs at all. Meanwhile the Rios's lamentable performance as parents has been brought against them. Their greatest disqualification is that they are dead; perhaps from henceforth a life assurance adjuster will be added to the panel of evaluators for IVF and embryo transfer.

In real life, children have the right to take their chances, and the freedom to suffer pain as well as joy; only in the test-tube fantasy can children be created with no chances, and the freedom to suffer pain as well as joy; only in the test-tube fantasy can children be created with no chance of being anything but as healthy and happy as befits artefacts produced

(Continued page 43.)

FROM PLAYPOWER TO PLAYPEN

by Richard Neville

We three men sat in this ramshackle house by the ocean, savouring the rhythm of the pounding waves and waiting for the next tantrum. In the next bedroom, raw egos were simmering. A gust of wind crashed a door. I glanced at the man opposite, moodily tapping his fingers on his knee and wondered whether Ricky also felt strange about being here.

It was a bit like a scene from *Key Largo* – only we weren't mobsters. We were here because of our wives; who were shut in the video room, editing tape. On this hot Saturday afternoon the fathers had agreed to mind the children. And when my daughter staggered from the bedroom holding a fluffy giraffe, her nappy fell off. Ricky's mouth twisted into a sneer: "Still stumped by disposables", he said and both men laughed. Their kids were older than mine. Then followed a discussion on toilet training. It was a movie alright – three edgy men on a windswept coast and I was playing the wimp. This was... *Creche Lago*.

How did I get here? What process had led an adventurer – had led three mature adventurers – to abandon all other possibilities that afternoon? It was connected with feminism, obviously. The three women zapping the video bank were no doormats, but it was much more than that. We were there because of a new concept of fatherhood.

From the outside it can seem absurd, pathetic. That drooling beefcake at the beach with a garden spade labouring over sandcastles for his indifferent toddler. The dowdy dad on the fringe of the party stooped under the weight of a baby

in a backpack – his wife kicking up her heels with a bigshot. Our clothes are hideously stained. Our eyes, which hang low in the sockets, are tinged with the envy of seeing off too many mates on the Marrakech Express. Not going, but waving.

There's an occasional jaunt to the in-laws in a car encumbered by highchairs or the thrill of hiding the Minties at the treasure hunt. Movies unseen, books unread. Gone are the delights of those faraway childless year... and yet, when some men become parents, they hardly miss a beat.

"I didn't see my first son, Julian, grow up... I was not there for his childhood at all. I was on tour..." So said John Lennon, whose own father had been similarly absent. In emotional terms, this "absence" applied to my father and many of his contemporaries.

Around four, I was encouraged to hide in the wardrobe as a jokey welcome to a uniformed stranger – my father. Fresh from the war, he remained through the years affable and remote; lost in work, the pub, tennis... sometimes we strolled down the hill together for a swim... but soon it was time for me to go back to boarding school. That's the way it was – such a waste.

Had I become a father at an earlier age, before the balance of the sexes changed, I probably would have repeated the pattern.

Instead, on my first nervous night at the inner city birthclass I was told to lie on my back on the floor. "Imagine there is a pool of water in your stomach and a baby floats in it," said the voice, "and soon you will be pushing this baby through an underground river and out into the ocean..." She continued, launching the class into a deep meditation and the men into unusual convulsions. As the weeks went on, strapping ockers groaned, pushed, practised their Kegals, panted and dealt with pain. Comparing all this, up to the birth of our baby at home, to my own father's pot-shooting of Japanese in New Guinea at an equivalent time in his life, gives one clue to the discrepancy in parenting styles. Another, is fashion.

By the time Lucy was a kicking and screaming vortex of responsibilities, I had already become familiar with the New Father.

He looked haunted and forlorn, his face betraying a secret ache for two weeks' big game fishing with the boys. No, mostly, as he flopped about in the chaos of his Romper Room house, the

New Father radiated soppy joy. I remember a New Year's Day when various rakes and seasoned travellers hired a boat for a picnic on a deserted beach. Only one was a father, a New Father, who took his toddler in the water and threw him into the air, caught him and then threw him higher still... higher and higher the little boy went and louder and louder was his laughter. The gossiping stopped and all the rakes rushed into the water to share in the joy of the game, drawn by the high between parent and child; a high, rare, unbounded and better than anything else.

The essence of New Fathering is time, quality time; being there, patience (ugh!) and indiscreet love. It is nurturing the luminous curiosity of childhood, not stifling, misleading or escaping it. All the buffetings and psychological insights of the last twenty years are tenderly laundered and left hanging loose – play power applied.

*Being a New Father
is bad for business –
upwardly mobile he is not.*

Being a New Father is bad for business – upwardly mobile he is not. In immortal verses, the metaphysical poets dealt with the problems of combining the spiritual life with worldly affairs. Who deals today with the balance between ambition and immersion parenting? For a while, feminists lamented the career costs of child rearing, then organised creches so they could run shops or the ABC. For generations, men have valued worldly ambition above commitments to infants. Now, as they clumsily readjust their priorities, they suffer bouts of resentment against the mothers; confusion, self derision. Scrapping the dried pumpkin soup off the ceiling – the result of a high chair tantrum – they fear, like Marianne Faithfull, no more trips to Paris in a sports car.

Brilliant careers take time and time, suddenly, is scarce.

One of the few essays by a man weighing up this dilemma appeared some years ago in *New Parent*, a monthly magazine published by Parent Centres, Australia. Part of it is reproduced on these pages. After questioning our obsession with Reaching the Top ("exciting, not satisfying"), the author, David Stewart, (university professor, father of five) points out that "it is a rare personal accomplishment to be so significant as to make any great dif-



The temptation to seek career and neglect family is very seductive. Its attraction and ability to confuse one's sense of values is almost satanic. There is something about fame and peer recognition; something about the money, the position, the power, the praise, and the promotions offered by a career that are exceedingly enticing. One receives so much encouragement from nearly everyone to seek these things, while one receives little encouragement, if not downright discouragement, to spend time at home with the family.

To be a successful career person, you can never stop. The rat race never ends. The more you do, the more is expected. The pressure is never off and usually increases. Therefore, I do not believe that career success can bring you happiness. It cannot even assure you security. It can disappear almost overnight, even for a triviality. A person who opts for career first may be famous, respected, and wealthy today and forgotten, derided, and destitute tomorrow, but they who put

family first reap rewards for life.

Although you may not realise it, the effect that you have on society today is influenced for good or ill by the things that your great-grandparents did a century ago. A well-raised child is a happy child. Happy people make others happy and make good parents themselves. Generation after generation benefits. The results of the secure family go on and on like a chain reaction.

But so also do the results of a neglected family. The roots of most social problems may very well be poor family life – crime, violence, drug abuse, prostitution, neurosis, divorce, delinquency, and general unhappiness. Deficiencies at home are manifested as deficiencies in society.

This can wait and that can wait, but the growth of your child does not wait. To enjoy a two-year-old, you must do it when he or she is two.

A perfect example of the human values intrinsic to children can be seen in babies. They prefer to be held rather than to be housed in an expensive crib. They don't care if you're a

president or a pauper. They prefer a crinkly piece of paper to an expensive toy.

You can choose a minimum level of acceptable achievement that does leave adequate free time for your home. By investing your spare time in your family you can be happy both in your career and in your home life. Although you may not achieve the outstanding professional status of those who choose to dedicate a larger portion of their time to their work, you are still to be counted as a success, because success is measured by setting a goal and achieving it.

Make the time you spend at your work really count. I don't spend a lot of time in the coffee room. My free time I like to spend at home. So when I work, I try to just work.

If my job ever got so big that it interfered too much with my happiness and my relationships with my wife and children, I would quit. There are lots of ways to make a living, but I have only one wife and one family.

From *La Leche League News*.

ference fifty years later, but the way you raise your children will make a difference fifty, even a hundred years hence... Generation after generation benefits." The views and values expressed by Stewart are alien to our society... a society which sometimes seems to be run by people estranged from their offspring.

Why?

That so many bright youngsters are choosing slow suicide can't all be blamed on the bomb or the pusher.

Who dares comment, when none are immune from a similar fate? In the parenting game there are no guarantees and many a syrupy mum and dad have driven their children to the other end of the world. Smack, however, is an extreme rejection. That so many bright youngsters are choosing slow suicide can't all be blamed on the bomb or the pusher. It might say something about bonding, the lack of... or "absence" or a love too silently expressed. The tale of a father driven to seek the highest office in the land has been publicised with dramatic consequences. Were the tears too few, too late? Who knows? Many absent fathers wept along...

The scene became a national metaphor. Other figures of authority were shown to have fathered junkies... and we all felt uneasy at the publicity. Are such tragedies really "inexplicable" and "private" or do they, beyond the headlines, have sober implications? I

know a man, now retired, with a close-knit, loving family. When young, he had an exotic profession which whirled him around the world. As soon as his first child was born he resigned and took a duller job on lower pay. He wanted to spend the weekends building billycarts and dolls houses. I used to sneer. Now I suspect it was heroic.

New Fathering has its dangers; of which the first is over indulgence. In the rush to compensate for the coolness of their own parents, us new dads stretch tolerance to the point of insanity. If not their own, their friends. It is one thing to take toddlers to dine with grown-ups, even to sit them at the same table. But when the screaming fits begin, the besotted dad beamingly filches missiles for his child from the other guests' plates and remains oblivious to the appalled glances and stilted conversation. The tyrant at the table is just another time bomb.

Another danger is cracking up. All single parents – to whom I offer a heartfelt salute – will know what is meant. Couples who work to erratic deadlines find it hard to get help and men of a certain age are used to prolonged bouts of serene concentration. Alas, no more. When the pressure builds up I dream of the Foreign Legion. "Just nicking out for some Gauloise!" I shout, striding towards the airport.

And friends change. Staying with bachelors, gay or otherwise, is fraught with catastrophe. After a few hours, grim-visaged hosts trail after you with

Wettex, dustpan and brush. Their houses, shrines to order and modernity, are no match for anarchy. I used to be the same. Mothers of teenage children now delight in reminding me how ghastly I was when their visiting toddlers moved my ashtray. How cozy, these days, are homes that are already junkyards.

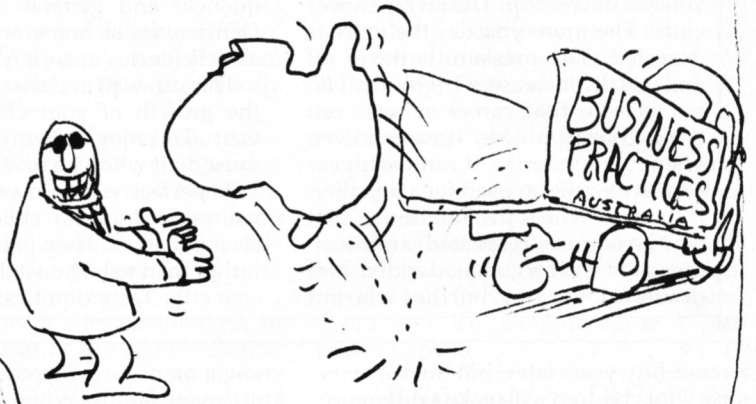
Other values are changing almost imperceptibly and I'm really too nervous to examine the process: attitudes to abortion, in-laws, dinner parties, spiders, Spring, music, New York... Trusty emotions are being shook up, hidden ones dragged from the dark well of the unconscious. My child was recently ill and, as Marion MacDonald once put it, the whole world shrinks to the size of a diving bell.



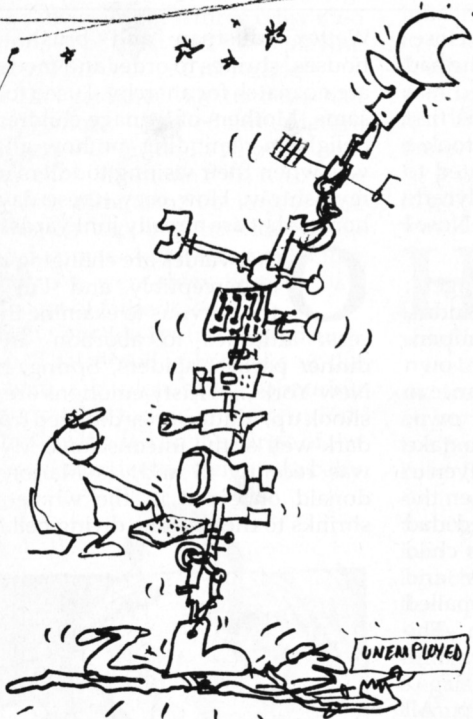
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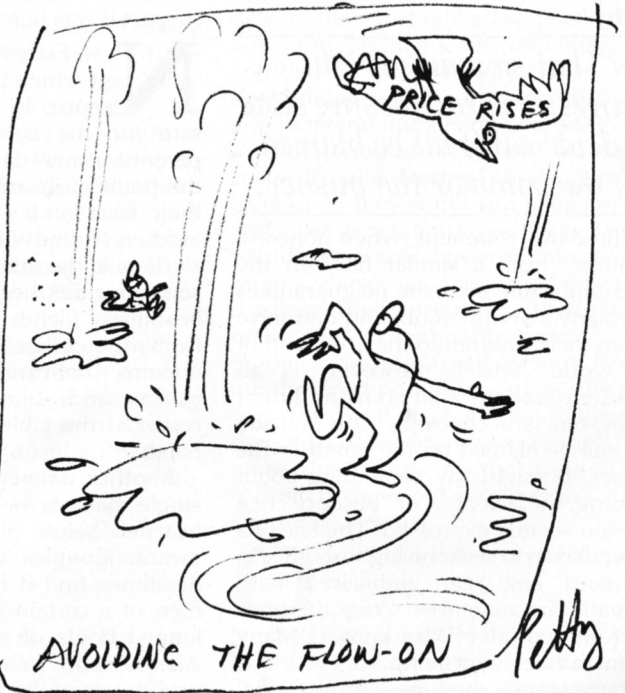
GROWTH RATE



CORRUPTION



HIGH TECH (A SMALL STEP FOR MAN)



AVOIDING THE FLOW-ON

New computer talk

by Adam Hochschild

When it comes to computers, I'm a Fiddler, not a Believer. We Fiddlers, with the illusion that we're being productive, can devote an entire evening to altering a program so one key stroke instead of four will set in action an exotic command we will use only once a month.

Believers are people like Stewart Brand and his fellow editors of the Whole Earth Software Catalogue, who hope that computers can make our society more humane, more democratic, more decentralized.

Because computers are so much fun, I wish I could be a Believer, but I'm not. 'Although I do have an idea for a revolutionary word-processing program, which I'; get to in a moment.)

The Whole Earth people claim that 'with the coming of personal computers came a shift in the power balance.' information is power, they imply; the computer owner gains power by having easy access to vast amounts of data.

Then there are all the electronic mail networks you can dial to talk to colleagues and fellow hobbyists – but many of these folks seem to spend their time communicating mainly about computers.

People also made optimistic predictions of a better life when radio broadcasting was invented. But despite the changes radio wrought, democratization was not among them. Governments use radio to peddle propaganda. Manufacturers use it to peddle products. Armies use it to better wage war. And ham radio operators use it mainly to talk to each other about their radio sets. I see certain similarities to computers.

No matter how technologically powerful a new tool – and the computer may be the most powerful of the lot – it rarely changes social power relations: either those between classes or those between governments and citizens.

People in power control how the tool gets used – which is why most of the approximately 13 million Americans who look at computer screens each workday are generally doing mind-numbing jobs like entering insurance claim data or compiling mailing lists.

I have to take my hat off to the authors and editors of the Whole Earth Software Catalogue, however. Despite being Believers, they proselytize only sparingly and unobtrusively.

There are reviews of programs to give you recipes (tell the computer what you've got in the icebox), of programs to monitor your marathon training, of computer magazines for children.

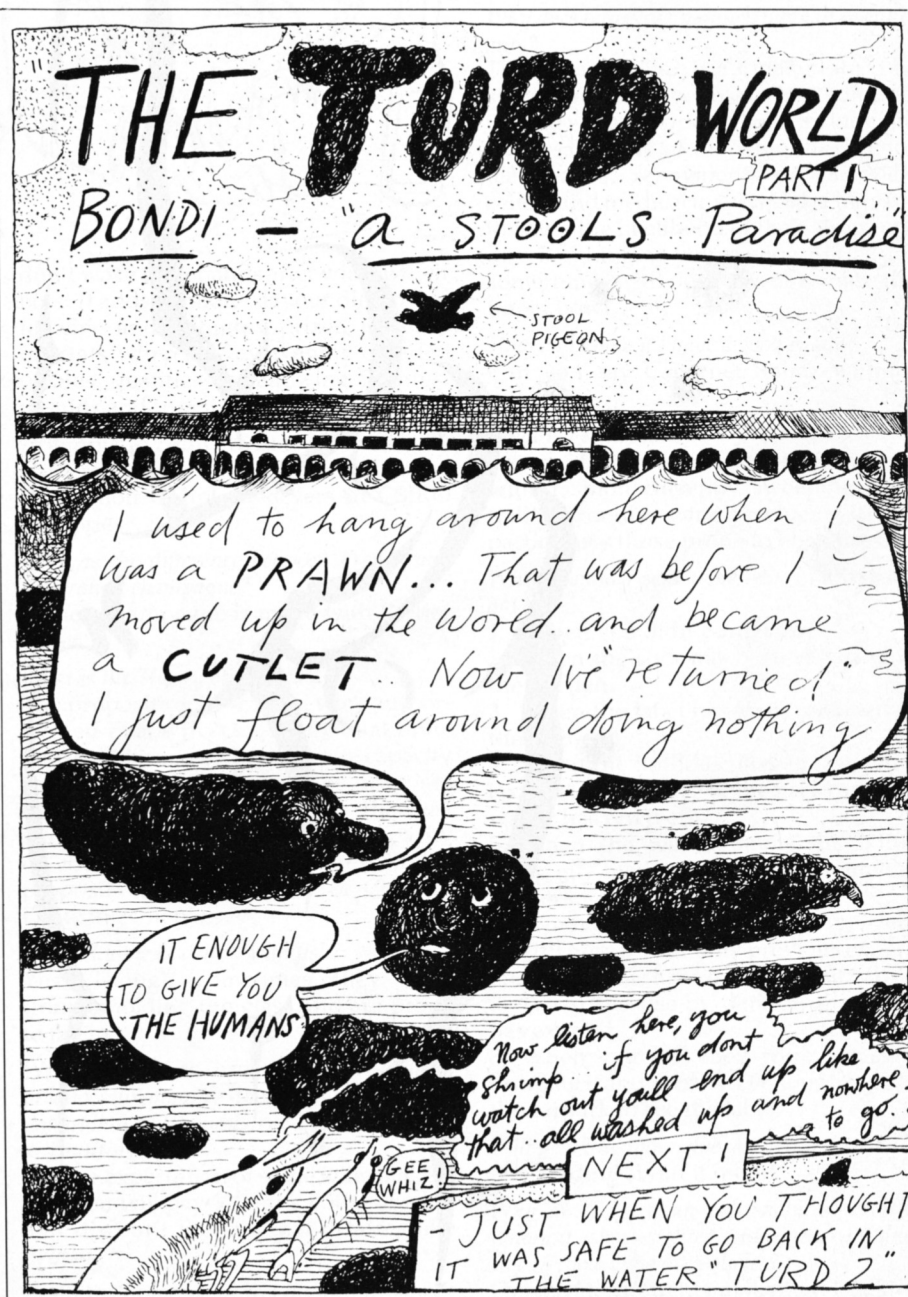
The authors wisely caution us: "Acquire as little software as you can get by with, and stick with it." But few will be the readers disciplined enough to follow that advice. It is impossible to read the Whole Earth Software Catalogue and not come across products, networks, programs that you want to look into. I made notes of half a dozen.

Unlike most people who write computer books and magazines, Stewart Brand and his collaborators haven't lost their command of that great reprogramming language, English. They write with grace and wit. And, sometimes, with humility: "Every now and then I understand the difference between 8 and 16 and 32 bit, but it doesn't matter to understand it, so I forget again."

Like writing about music or wine,

writing about computers can easily float off into a certain mistiness. Music is best listened to – not put down in words; wine is best tasted, and computers – well, played with. The catalogue's authors call one word-processing program 'awkward but rich,' another 'clean and powerful,' another 'harsh, fast.' Clean? Harsh?

They also have the effrontery to call my beloved WordStar 'decrepit.' After a while, such adjectives sound nebulous, too redolent of, "There's a good nose on this Cabernet, but it hasn't quite got the texture of some of the '79s." Ignore such verbiage when you read the catalogue, and go straight to the useful, concrete descriptions of what the programs can and can't do.



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NOT A WINE COLUMN

by Morris Gleitzman

Suddenly everyone wants to know about wine. Beer, liqueurs, casual sex and voting formally have fallen by the wayside as opiates of the people and wine is on everyone's lips.

Nobody cops it worse than the wine writer. Everyone wants to pick your brains. Only a few days ago the bloke backing the semi up to my cellar with the week's tasting samples wanted to know if Ben Ean do a chardonnay.

Here then, before we get onto the heavy stuff next month, are the questions I am most frequently asked about wine.

Does red wine cause migraine?

In some instances it definitely does, such as when a bottle is broken over the head. If it is merely drunk, it depends largely on whether you believe it will. The likelihood increases slightly if the volume of red wine consumed is greater than one bottle for every Bailey's Irish Cream chaser.

What glasses should I use for champagne?

Your strongest pair. Champagne labels can be misleading enough for people with perfect sight, specially those on cheap Australian junk tricked up to look French.

How do I know if a wine is ready to drink?

Buy a dozen and serve a bottle a year to friends until their eyes stop watering. Whatever you do, don't pay any attention to winemaker's comments on labels which read: 'Drinking superbly now or will reward careful cellaring for up to 40 years.' Most winemakers are cynics. Like Vietnam veterans, it comes from discovering their medals don't mean anything.

Don't drink anything with a lower Ph than your shampoo. If technical terms confuse you, shampoos are the ones without corks.

Should I only cook with high quality wine?

It pays dividends, but be sensible. Nobody expects you to consign a '29 Latour to the stove, specially if you're only boiling an egg.

Should I taste wine in restaurants?

No. Given the quality of most restaurant wine lists, don't put it in your mouth at all. Check the label, pay the waiter and ask him to tip it down the sink. Only this way will the message be brought home to lazy restaurateurs.

What is Botrytis?

A fungal disease that develops under the right finger-nails of winemakers who



don't wash their hands after wiping their bots. It adds a unique flavour dimension to wine and is highly prized in those quarters where the awakening of jaded palates justifies swallowing spores, moulds and fungii.

Attempts to cultivate Botrytis artificially have received a major setback after the installation of hot air dryers in CSIRO lavatories.

What is the difference between French and Australian champagne?

French champagne is made with Perrier water.

What is the Theory of Capacity?

The proposition by leading wine authority Len Evans that our individual finite life-span gives each of us a finite capacity for wine consumption. Evans proposes that we therefore only drink the best wine and don't waste any of our capacity on cheap rubbish. The weakness in this proposition is the scarcity of Chateau Lafite in Ethiopia.

Can red wine be drunk with fish?

Yes. Though sometimes they have trouble holding the glass and are prone to fall in.

We hear often that discounting is an insidious practice threatening the very heart of the Australian wine industry. What exactly is discounting?

It is the expectation of some wine makers that you will pay \$10 for a bottle of wine and discount the fact that it tastes like Brasso.

How exactly does soil affect the taste of wine?
Put some in a glass and see.

What country produces the best whites?

For many years South Africa had laid claim to that title so now its discerning wine drinkers prefer their blacks.

Which wine will live longest assuming it is cellared at a constant temperature of 55 degrees F. in dry non-humid atmosphere free from light, vibration, dampness, mould and corkworm.

Stone's Green Ginger.

Is bottling wine at home a proposition?

Yes, unless you have already drunk it in which case it is a perversion.

Why does wine cost so much more in restaurants?

The restaurateur has to take into consideration a number of costs in computing the wine list price. These include the wholesale price of the wine, his licence fee, wages, repayments on his Mercedes, and medical insurance for his staff to cover the likelihood of their slipping a disc laughing at you paying \$11.50 for something with less flavour than the finger bowl.

How do I know if I have a good palate?

Can you say Cabernet Shiraz without dribbling.

What is Fume Blanc?

French. It means smoke-white and is a wine fashion currently sweeping Australia's trendier wine producing areas, particularly those prone to bush fires.

When should I sent wine back in a restaurant?

1. When you didn't order any.
2. When the cork has been removed in the kitchen.
3. When the label has been removed in the kitchen.
4. When the bottle is ullaged (i.e. wine level below the base of the neck) and the waiter has red teeth.
5. When the waiter opens the bottle using any method other than removing the cork.
6. When the wine tastes off (be very careful here if your only previous experience with wine has been at Barmitzvah).
7. When the use-by date on the bottle has expired.
8. When you feel they were too slow bringing it and there isn't enough light in the carpark to see the label.

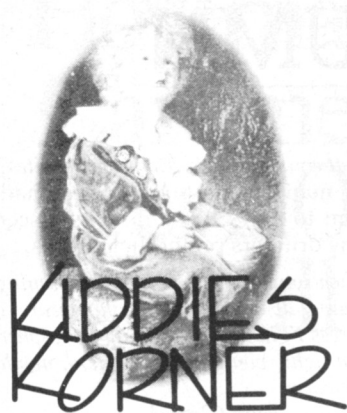
Will drinking wine give you brain damage?

No, reading about it might.

Why are Australian politicians so erratic, ignorant, short-sighted and counter-productive in their wine tax policies?

On second thoughts make that last answer 'yes'.

TEST YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE



KIDDIES KORNER

with Aunt Mathilde

Doodly-doodly-do.
The Brisbane kids sniff glue.
If I had to live the way they do,
I'd probably sniff some too.

J. Wise, Hobart.



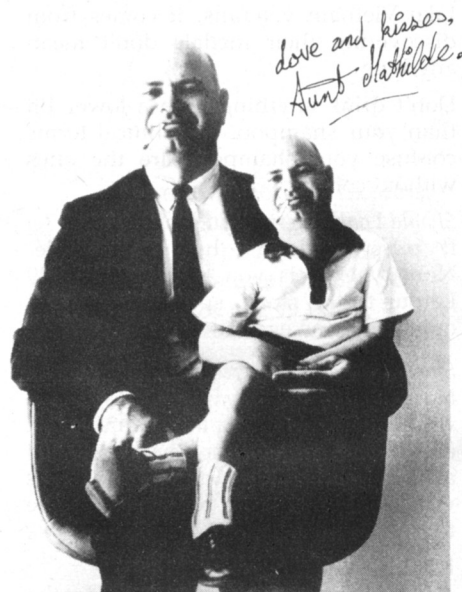
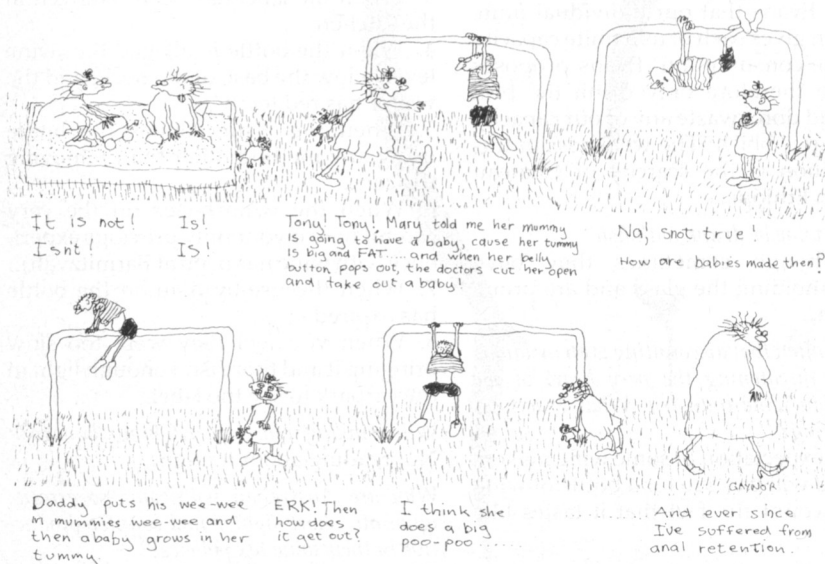
Governor Generals are a funny lot. They always live in a big house by a lake and have many servants. Sometimes they wear Boy Scout uniforms, sometimes they sack Prime Ministers and sometimes they fall over at the races.

Despite the odd lifestyle, they can be kindly souls, prone to dispensing shiny medals to the brave and garden parties to the disadvantaged.

There's a coloured Matilda poster by Michael Leunig to be won by picking the present Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen in the accompanying photograph.

Simply circle the head of your choice and send to Aunt Mathilde, P.O. Box 80, Deakin, A.C.T. 2600.

CLUE: Sir Ninian comes from Queensland and doesn't usually wear fur coats.



How do you feel?
In the Great Outback, with
just one pack, and wild pigs steal
your food??
How d'ya feel? How d'ya feel???

I feel like a yam root or two

by David McKnight

If you are studying Aboriginal bush foods, you might well respond:

I feel like a yam root

I feel like a yam root or two...

That's not exactly how Vic Cherikoff felt, but it describes what happened to him in Cape York last year while on a field study when his food was eaten by wild pigs. Cherikoff is part of a Sydney University study team examining the food eaten by Aborigines which allowed them to survive one of the world's harshest physical environments.

The study team, which also includes Professor Stewart Truswell and Dr Jenny Brand, have already made several startling discoveries. The green or native plum, found in Australia's Top End and northern Western Australia, was found to have the world's most concentrated source of Vitamin C.

But the green plum has also created headaches: an American syndicated columnist, John Turner, told his readers that the fruit is "the main item in the diets of certain tribes of Australian bushmen most of whom are over seven feet tall weigh 250 pounds and live to over 100 years old."

A non-existent nutritionist at the University of Sydney, 'Wesley Hargreave' is quoted as an authority on the life-giving

properties of the juice of the 'super-fruit'. The name Wesley Hargreave elicits a groan from the genuine researchers because they have been inundated with media inquiries and letters from hopeful Americans who want long life or a miracle cure for arthritis (another fraudulent claim of Turner's).

Closer to home than the green plum, the team has found that the seeds of the

Kurrajong tree can be ground into a flour to produce a damper which, "tastes terrific", according to Cherikoff (the team taste most bush foods).

The seeds of several species of Australia's national flower, the wattle, are still used to make damper by Aborigines and are highly nutritious, according to Dr Brand.

But there seems to be more interest from overseas in the commercial development of Australian native plants than from within Australia. Two overseas-based companies in Darwin are now looking at the commercial growth of the green plum. "Some years ago the solanum species were found to contain crude steroids. The Russians came in, took them back to the Soviet Union and today a lot of the world buys their steroids for oral contraceptives from the USSR," says Vic Cherikoff.

The only native food commercially exploited on a large scale within Australia is the well-known Macadamia nut, but there is much greater potential, say the researchers.

The CSIRO is now examining the quandong or native peach which was used not only by Aborigines but by early European settlers for jam-making and pies.



WRONG TURNINGS ON THE WALLABY TRACK



Peter Morris

Monologue in C sharp.

Great Moments In Kitchen History



Bob Barnes, Courier Mail



A. Geschmidt



Sheila Grey Format



Stephen Holland

A day at the races.

Great Moments In State Politics



Herald and Weekly Times



Peter Morris

Cold sores, amyl nitrate and a lesbian orgy

Recently I made a devastating discovery. My phone is not tapped by ASIO. While everyone else conspires in whispering clusters over late night cognacs about whirrs and buzzes and unexplained twangs, I have nothing more sinister to report than an occasional crossed line. (My personal life is not obscene and not heard.)

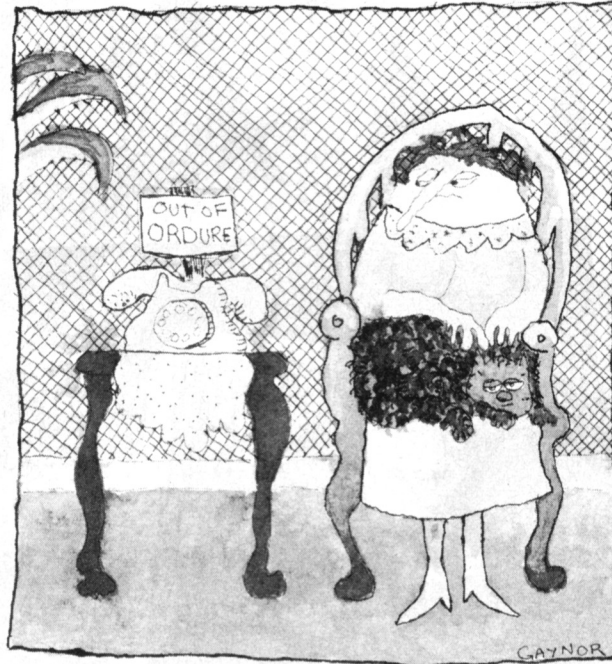
This lack of personal leaks, led me to conduct a Royal Commission into my charisma. I prosecuted my personality. The verdict? That I suffer from delusions of adequacy.

At 26, not only am I telephone tapless, but I have never had a speeding ticket, a game of black jack, a group grope in a jacoozi, a cold sore, amyl nitrate, a lesbian offer or an orgy. In a world geared to quantity not quality, success, fame and celebrities I am not even a *Has Been*. But a *Never Was*.

While girlfriends swap details of infidelities, I can only claim going to bed with my vaporiser. Other women, whilst helping dinner party hosts prepare dessert, are always being passionately ravaged across kitchen tables. I have never come home with pavlova stains on my shirt back. Never. Not once. Occasionally, when I do find myself contorted into Japanese erotic love positions, I worry about chiropractor's bills. I get bored conducting anatomical orienteering for alternative erogenous zones; between the toes, interior of nostrils, either vocal chord. For some reason I prefer reaching climax without realigning the spine.

It's not just my charisma and carnality that's not worth tapping into. But also, my character. One night, friends were discussing whether or not they'd break down under torture. I hate pain. I needed a general anaesthetic to get my ears pierced. To trim toe nails, I have to take a mogodon and go to bed for a day. Electric currents... knives... sleeplessness... water torture; whilst joining their courageous chorus, I suppressed the confession that I would sell my soul at the threat of AMEX card confiscation.

While the rest of Sydney-ites ricochet from EST seminars to aerobic psycho-



by **Kathy Lette**

therapy to cocktail parties and premieres, I never have a previous engagement. I am the sort of guest loathed by every host. Here today and here tomorrow. I am also one of those people at dinner parties, who has nothing to say and spends the whole night saying it. While sophisticated guests lecture knowledgeably on the preserved anatomical parts of renowned saints, flatulence levels of exotic cuisines and the ASIO bug epidemic, I can only yabber and yacker about diets, dental flossing techniques and the calorie contents of cottage cheese. What's more, I'm the kind of bore, when you ask me how I am, I tell you. In tedious, PMT-ed detail.

Invitations, have of course, stopped. Perhaps, I mused, I'd be appreciated posthumously? "What if I died of terminal ingrown toenails tomorrow?" I asked friends, "Would you miss me?"

"Of course. We'd miss your AMEX card and... um... um... of course we'd miss you!"

Analysts, magazines and chat show guests preach continuously that you can tell everything about someone by taking a quick squizz inside their fridge. A quick investigation of my kitchen confirmed fears of inferiority. An analysis of my Westinghouse personality proved that I was a barren, frigid, slime grime type with a little expired cottage cheese. I rang David Jones' food hall home delivery, to fill up my personality.

But, Tibetan owls' testes and creamed miniature Guavan cumquats made little difference to my dial tone. Still no whirrs, buzzes or twangs. Neither did the wasted hours spent having facials and nail filing. In these consumer-crazed days, why isn't there a salon that grooms the psyche? We Bores require something that caters not to vanity, but sanity. Brain-dressers could give personality perms. Finishing off with, not blow waves, but brain waves.

But surely notoriety does not come naturally? Why was I the only one in inner Sydney suffering a charisma-ectomy? Perhaps the charismatic nurtured their natures?

For weeks I swatted up on anatomical preservations and National Times tape paranoias and dropped them casually into phone conversations. At New Year parties, I pontificated so much, my drinks evaporated. "How much crude petroleum is produced by non-Indo-European lesbians?" I quizzed Trivial Pursuit contestants, dismissing their hesitations with gasps of "Oh, how easy!"

I took out a subscription to the newest political, social satirical magazine. And wrote for it.

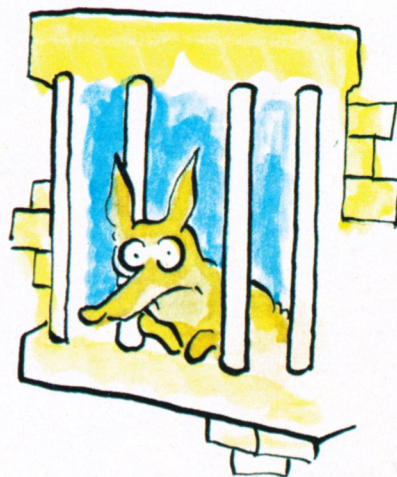
But all this personality rehabilitation did not cure my personality by-pass. These days, there is only one way to get enough pull to belong to the Push. Confess in forté whispers about unexplained twangs, whirrs and buzzes on your car phone. Overnight, your name will adorn the party lists and premieres.

But, a few weeks of being a *Now Is*, rather than a *Never Was* and I began to crave some conversation on footy scores and Franklin sales. You see, *Meaningful Conversation* is never either. There is nothing more boring than the person who thinks that they are interesting. What's more, jacoozis are about as inspiring as sitting for an hour, in a luke warm cappuccino. Speeding tickets; expensive. Amyl nitrate; nostril numbing. Cold sores; incurable. And lesbianism... nothing more than a slip of the tongue.

There's still one secret that hasn't been leaked to the National Times. That there's less to being elite than meets the eye.

ALAN BIGENOUCH

☆ STAR REPORTER ☆



DOG OUTRAGE
HORROR
EXC...

Cooney



When you walk into a country pub with David Combe these days, there's always half a dozen strangers who will approach him with expressions of sympathy or encouragement.

Some don't remember his name – "You're the bloke who got a rough deal from Hawke, aren't you?"

Some are brief – "Good luck to you, David!"

Others seek his confidential advice, as someone who has survived deep personal trauma.

It reinforces your faith in the Australian sense of fair play: these people recognise that Combe didn't get a fair go.

It was all supposed to change last July, when the ALP National Conference passed a unanimous resolution supposedly rehabilitating the former Party Secretary and sometime friend and confidant of Bob Hawke. He

would be restored to 'the mainstream of political life' and employed 'with his skills used to full benefit'.

The headlines said, "Combe Brought In From The Cold". Soon after, a Sydney businessman explained why he would not engage Combe as a lobbyist to represent his company in Canberra: "That ALP resolution? It will carry as much weight with Hawke as any of those Conference resolutions or platforms or policies."

Six months after his official welcome back to mainstream political life, the ALP had given him a total of four days work.

David Combe's life remained poisoned by the events of March 4, 1983, when he dined at the bugged house of Soviet official Valeri Ivanov. His drunken conversation, later reprinted in the press and re-

enacted on television and radio, showed him to be ambitious, boastful, talkative, and prone to exaggeration. On the basis of that conversation, ASIO constructed out of the Combe-Ivanov relationship an arcane pattern of subversion and disloyalty which Hawke endorsed with vigour.

Today David Combe is struggling to find himself. He and Meena Blesing are working hard at restoring the marriage that fell apart under the strain of ASIO surveillance. Her diary of the crisis will be published this year, as will David's comprehensive account of the Combe-Ivanov affair.

The following narrative lifts the lid on the secret trial of David Combe, the meetings of Cabinet ministers with ASIO chieftains where the lobbyist's fate was determined.

William Pinwill

NATIONAL
AFFAIRS

Inside the Star Chamber

Untold stories of spooks, government and Combe

by David Combe

If Bill Hayden had not been toppled from the ALP leadership on February 3, 1983, it is more than likely that the public would never have heard of a Combe-Ivanov affair. The Russian would have remained in Canberra as First Secretary at the Embassy and my personal and professional life would not have been shattered.

While nothing is certain in politics, it is clear from a reading of the evidence given by minister's to the Hope Royal Commission that Hayden's rejection of the ASIO case was as total as Hawke's embrace of it. In persuading the Cabinet to ban me from access to ministers, Hawke went even further than his security advisers contemplated or wanted. In the immortal words of one ASIO officer, "We passed them the ball, and they kicked it out of sight".

The secrecy that shrouded the ministers' evidence to the Royal Commission

was designed partly to protect the identity of the informer Laurie Matheson and other ASIO 'sources and methods'. But much of it had nothing to do with national security – real or imagined. At the Government's insistence, the tradition of Crown privilege was imposed on ministerial evidence. The public could not be told, except in the very broadest terms, what transpired at the meetings of Cabinet's National and International Security Committee (NISC) which decided the fate of Ivanov and Combe.

The NISC decisions were presented as unanimous, which was a distortion of the truth. The reactions of individual ministers, the questions they asked, the doubts they held – all these aspects, essential to forming a proper opinion about the case against me, were suppressed from the public. While this may have sustained the myth of Cabinet solidarity, it was also politically necessary for the Prime Minister, since the case against

Ivanov was, in Hayden's homely metaphor, "as thin as boarding house soup, and there was no case against Combe".

My solicitor and I were also kept ignorant of this evidence during the course of the Commission by Justice Hope's decision to classify it as Class Two. But just as there are leaks from Cabinet every other week in Canberra, which the media dutifully pursue and publish in the national interest, so it is important for the historical record that a fuller picture be given of the NISC deliberations than has previously been available.

What is plain even from the public record is that when Harvey Barnet went to Hawke at 4.45 pm on April 20, he had carefully planned his line of attack. Like any ambitious bureaucrat, he had swotted up on his new Prime Minister. (He told the Commission he had read Blanche D'Alpuget's fulsome biography.) Like a well-trained spy, he had studied his

target, assessed his strengths and weaknesses, selected which strings to play upon and which drums to beat. History has shown that most politicians, and particularly those on the non-conservative side, are notoriously easy to 'snow' on matters of security and intelligence once they are in government. The 1973 raid on ASIO by Attorney General Lionel Murphy was shockingly offensive to the intelligence club because it was atypical as well as overbearing.

Barnett had measured his PM when he gave him a general security briefing soon after the 1983 election. He had also come to know his direct ministerial master, Senator Evans, over a series of meetings. The ASIO chief decided to avoid Evans and take the Ivanov-Combe problem over his head to Hawke. In retrospect, any fears Barnett may have had about a negative response from the Attorney General were clearly misplaced. He was prepared to wait 15 days for an appointment with Hawke, because the PM's grand piece of theatre, the National Economic Summit, was in production. (Lionel Bowen primly told the NISC meeting on April 21 that he would have thought national security took precedence over the economic summit.)

The head of ASIO had made the right decision about choice of advocate. The case that Hawke took to the NISC meetings that night and the next day was ASIO's case – errors and all – and he represented the spooks with all the skill and commitment he had once used on behalf of Australia's unionists.

But the Director General had miscalculated. He failed to anticipate that Hawke would move immediately to sever my links with the Government by banning access to ministers. Barnett maintained throughout the Commission that his quarry was the Russian diplomat, that I was an incidental embarrassment. He claimed that the notes from which he briefed Hawke, his *aide memoire* (which became one of the many secret exhibits before the Commission) established that the involvement of Combe and Matheson was peripheral to "my major concern, which focussed on Ivanov". Yet most of his presentation to the Prime Minister that afternoon of April 20 concerned me and my relationship with the Russian. By the end of the briefing, Hawke said (under cross-examination from my senior counsel, Ian Barker QC) he had come to three "prima facie conclusions": Ivanov should be expelled, I was to be placed under surveillance, and something would have to be done about my access to ministers.

It was the night before the ceremonial opening of parliament and most MPs were in Canberra. Hawke quickly decided that Barnett's bombshells warranted him calling the first-ever meeting of the National and International Sec-

*Like a well-trained spy,
Barnett had studied his
target, assessed his strengths
and weaknesses, selected
which strings to play upon
and which drums to beat.*

urity Committee of Cabinet, comprising the Deputy Prime Minister, Lionel Bowen, the Defence Minister, Gordon Scholes, the Attorney General, Gareth Evans, the Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, and the Special Minister of State, Mick Young, who had responsibility for the Australian Federal Police and the Protective Services Coordination Centre.

The Prime Minister told them that the Soviet First Secretary, Valeri Ivanov, was assessed to be a KGB officer, and this had been confirmed by a KGB defector now in the hands of the British intelligence service. He outlined ASIO's claims about the Combe-Ivanov relationship, highlighting the March 4 dinner and the so-called clandestinity proposal of April 3.

He asserted that I knew Ivanov to be a professional intelligence officer (which was untrue). He said I had been given a free passage on the Russian cruise ship Leonid Sobinov in 1976, and the Soviets had also paid the air fares for me and my wife Meena to Moscow and return in 1982 (both statements untrue). He referred to the recommendations in my report to Commercial Bureau and the information Matheson had given ASIO, though he did not at that stage know the name of the informer. I had charged the firm \$5000 for the report, according to Hawke, which showed my "greed and stupidity". I had cheated the firm, he said.

Hawke told his ministers that I had proposed an arrangement whereby I would provide political information to the Soviet authorities, and there was clear evidence this proposal went far beyond the normal relationship of a lobbyist and client. I was 'compromised'. The PM's account, Hayden told the Commission, "greatly disturbed me and my colleagues".

The ASIO Director General was summoned from his room at Canberra's Lakeside Hotel at about 9 pm, and, to his surprise, found himself briefing the NISC Committee. He confirmed the points Hawke had made, though he avoided the description 'compromised'.

Barnett depicted Ivanov as a highly skilled KGB operative who had graduated near the top of his class in 1976. The defector Vladimir Kuzahkin, code named 'Redwood', had

identified him as a "Line PR officer" concerned exclusively with political intelligence. The Director General made no secret of ASIO's desire for Ivanov's public expulsion, "because it would counteract criticisms which had been current to the effect that ASIO was ineffectual in detecting Soviet spies". He represented the \$5000 fee for the Moscow report as 'double dipping' since the trip was 'free' for both me and Meena. Ministers saw this as 'squalid behaviour', and even the sceptical Hayden felt "a little disgusted".

Barnett placed great emphasis on Ivanov's warning of my phone being tapped and his alleged proposal to communicate 'clandestinely' – a term which aroused agitation among the ministers. The ASIO chief canvassed the possibility of my being charged with a criminal offence, but said that might have "political implications". Hayden in particular was disturbed by that line of thinking, and argued, "If Combe has done anything illegal, he should be prosecuted".

Despite what the PM termed "a clear disposition" on the part of ministers to accept the Hawke-Barnett plan for a public expulsion of the KGB officer, ministers wanted more material from ASIO. "Barnett was vague, he wasn't briefed properly," Hayden said. "He was unable adequately to answer questions." He had no files on the case, no chronology of events, no transcripts of the incriminating conversations, despite the weeks of preparation for this vital appointment with the Government.

The NISC committee met again at 8.30 the next morning, April 21, this time with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Defence Minister. Hawke had in fact tracked down his Deputy in the early hours of the morning and sold him on the 'prima facie conclusions' he had already reached.

Bowen's presence at the morning conference added a new element to the proceedings. First of all, he expressed in what one minister called "strong terms" the view that I had committed a criminal offence – a conclusion that the previous night's meeting had not reached. Then, from his knowledge of Commercial Bureau and its owner, he was able to identify Matheson as the so-far-unnamed ASIO source, which Barnett confirmed.

But then the Deputy PM began a line of questioning that caused considerable discomfort to the Director General. What did ASIO know about Commercial Bureau? Was Barnett aware that CB's commercial ethics were decidedly dubious? How well had the ASIO people investigated Laurie Matheson? Did they know he was formerly in naval intelligence? Were his activities purely commercial? Were they sure Matheson was not a KGB contact himself? As Hayden later put to the Commission, "He

Laurie Matheson who gave all of his evidence to the Hope Royal Commission in secret, has not since become any less shy about court appearances.

By March last year, his company, Commercial Bureau of Australia, had employed sufficient time to pay my company the consultancy fees which Matheson had committed it to.

After all, one of the few agreements between us before the Commission was that a contract had been entered into on March 7, 1983, for me to work for CBA for an initial period of three months at a retainer of \$2,000 per month.

I wrote to solicitors for his company a letter of demand which said in part that failure to meet the debt promptly would leave me with no alternative but to initiate a further opportunity for Matheson and myself to give evidence under oath, both of us in public.

Some months later my solicitors issued a summons against Commercial Bureau which brought the response that liability was denied.

Still the debt remained unpaid which left us no choice but to commence proceedings to wind up the defaulting company.

Throughout negotiations, I had made it widely known that in any court proceedings which may flow from my determination to be paid, I would subpoena from ASIO the debriefs of Matheson by GH in which the oral contract had been discussed.

After all, the High Court had ruled in the Ananda Marga case that ASIO documents had no special privileges where they were relevant to normal processes of litigation.

To my amazement, my solicitors received early this year payment in full of the \$6,000 debt just as irreversible proceedings to wind up CBA were about to be commenced.

By some extraordinary good fortune, Matheson's company had been able to meet its debt, although unable to fund the threatened proceedings against me.

If he was denied a court appearance by settlement of my action against CBA, he was not to miss an opportunity altogether.

The Federal Director of Public Prosecutions, Ian Temby, QC late last year charged him and three others with conspiracy to defraud the Commonwealth Government – the very Government

which the year before had so steadfastly preferred his word to mine on all matters where there was disagreement between us.

Yet not for Matheson and his alleged co-conspirators was there the embarrassment of a public announcement by Mr Temby of his decision to prosecute them. Curiously, although one would have thought that the prosecution of Matheson was of at least equal public interest to that of Judge John Foord of the NSW District Court, he and those charged with him enjoyed a privilege not extended to Foord.

Indeed so great is the apparent veil of secrecy surrounding Matheson's prosecution that all queries relevant to Federal Ministers are met with what appears to be a deliberate withholding of information.

It is a poorly-kept secret that the Australian Federal Public Officers who investigated Matheson believe they have been thwarted by the Hawke Government in their endeavours to secure a conviction.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the court-shy Laurie Matheson is, or has been, much, much more than a mere ASIO informant of long standing.

seemed to me to go close to implying that Matheson may have been a Soviet agent." Under questioning from Matheson's counsel in camera, Bowen claimed he only wanted to know "where Matheson fitted into the picture in Russian trade". He had learned of the Melbourne businessman's intelligence connections from his Sydney rival and ex-employee, Bruce Fasham. "Mr Barnett showed reluctance in answering my questions," said Bowen. "ASIO likes to protect its sources."

The Director General floundered. He claimed he did not know his informer's links to naval intelligence. ASIO had no reason to doubt his loyalty and had not monitored his phone or put him under surveillance, he told the meeting. (Unbeknown to either Barnett or the ministers, Matheson had voiced fears to his ASIO case officer, 'GH', that someone was tapping his phone.) Bowen was far from satisfied. The other ministers, though puzzled by the Deputy Prime Minister's hostility to the Melbourne trader, were struck by Barnett's unpreparedness.

The meeting moved on to discuss my report to Matheson. The ASIO head was asked how extensive a document it was, and whether \$5000 was a reasonable fee. "We became increasingly uneasy about the unsatisfactory responses from Barnett," Hayden said. Young asked to see the report in question, but it was locked away in a safe in ASIO's Melbourne office. Hayden asked what it was like,

and a suspicion grew that the \$5000 fee was something more sinister.

"We needed an attitude from Barnett," the Foreign Minister said.

"We wanted to know if it was a laundering operation." Barnett's inability to provide firm answers about Matheson raised doubts about ASIO's basic propositions: my agreement to supply political intelligence, my desire to enrich myself, my anti-Americanism, the clandestinity proposal, my awareness that Ivanov was KGB. "There was a degree of dissatisfaction with the level of detail that was produced to supply these essentially conclusion-type statements," in the Attorney General's deathless prose.

Hawke sensed that his *prima facie* conclusions of the night before were looking fragile, and he instructed the Director General to get the relevant documentation up from Melbourne. His two most senior ministers, Bowen and Hayden, had earlier expressed doubts about ASIO's past performance in detecting espionage.

Barnett realised he had to get his act together. He promptly ordered a charter aircraft be booked to bring two ASIO officers and all the documents from Melbourne to Canberra in time for the next meeting of NISC scheduled for 12.30 pm that day.

The meeting began at 12.40 with Evans tabling legal advice from the Attorney General's Department that I had committed no offence under the Crimes Act

This evidently came as a disappointment to Hawke. According to Opposition Leader Andrew Peacock, who was briefed by the PM later that day, "He said he wished he could prosecute Mr Combe but legal advice was against that course". Lionel Bowen was also disappointed. To caucus colleagues who were outraged by the actions against me, Bowen was muttering darkly, "Combe should be put behind bars for what he's done".

The ASIO quartet then took the floor, but their performance did not meet with universal acclamation. As Hayden noted, "Other officers did in fact attend the second meeting armed with some files, although even they seemed to me ill-equipped to do what they came for. For example, they fumbled for files and transcripts and seemed under-prepared".

The Foreign Minister pressed his earlier enquiry: was the report to Matheson worth \$5000? As it happened, the report to Matheson was still sitting in an ASIO safe in Melbourne. It was so secret it had been placed in a special sealed envelope, and in the rush to catch the charter plane (Barnett told the Commission), it was overlooked.

When the ASIO team discovered this omission, they ordered that excerpts be telexed to Canberra, but these had still not come through when the meeting ended. (It makes you wonder what they'd be like in a real emergency.)

Fortunately for the Barnett quartet, Mick Young seemed to have forgotten

his earlier interest in the report. Not one minister asked to see it – although Michael McHugh QC, counsel for the Government, later described it as “the most decisive document in the case”. Instead, the ASIO quartet offered readings from the transcript of my bugged dinner conversation with Ivanov on March 4, selecting those extracts which suited their case. Hayden said in evidence that the extracts had “sinister connotations which were not there when you read the whole transcript”.

A number of ministers were still worried about ASIO’s judgment of Matheson. Bowen’s hostility was unabated and Hayden’s suspicions had quickly hardened. “I suggested surveillance on Matheson,” he revealed to an in camera hearing of the Commission. “I did not trust him operating in the intelligence field.” Bowen also wanted the informer’s phone tapped, but the suggestion was not taken up by Hawke and Barnett.

He asked Barnett if Ivanov had “consummated anything” and the Director General agreed he had not. The Foreign Minister, whose portfolio included responsibility for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, went on to say, “Ivanov has not gone further than ASIS operatives in seeking to carry out intelligence activities in other countries.”

He told his colleagues that his department had reported some unauthorised travel by Soviet officials including Ivanov, and he concluded there were causes for suspicion which required testing by a full-scale surveillance of Ivanov by ASIO.

“But we must not act in haste,” Hayden warned.

Then Young reminded the meeting of the so-called ‘clandestinity warning’.

As I was leaving Ivanov’s house on Easter Sunday, the Russian told me that ASIO had been tapping my phone since my Moscow visit the previous November. He suggested that if we needed to make contact in future, we should visit one another rather than use the phone. Unlike the earlier part of our conversation, these remarks were not recorded by ASIO because we were out of range of the listening device in Ivanov’s home.

Of the several possible explanations for this tip-off, the most likely is that he was passing on some scuttlebutt that his colleague Lev Koshliakov had picked up around the Parliament House Press Gallery.

Alternatively, it may have been a brush-off. By then, Ivanov must have realised his identity as a KGB officer had most probably been blown by the defector Vladimir Kuzichkin, who had gone over the British in Teheran the previous year, and who had been a classmate of Ivanov’s at KGB training school.

Laurie Matheson was one of people to whom I mentioned the Russians friendly

warning, and on April 5 Matheson passed it on – in a highly garbled form to his ASIO case officer.

“Mr Combe told him that Ivanov had warned him to adopt a very low profile and not to ring Ivanov or see him,” the ASIO Director General told the meeting of ministers. “Combe’s version as relayed by Mr Matheson included a direction by Ivanov that Combe was not to contact Ivanov but that Ivanov would contact him as required.

“ASIO attached considerable importance to the revelation of Ivanov’s warning to Combe,” said Barnett, “because it indicated a definitive stage in the cultivation process, whereby the target is positively directed to keep future contact clandestine. In ASIO’s opinion, for Ivanov to move to that stage would normally require express approval from Moscow.”

It was this dangerously-distorted hearsay version of the conversation that Attorney General Evans had the hide to describe as a “full record”. Without having heard any of my side of the story, most of the ministers decided Ivanov’s ‘clandestinity warning’ was a cause for major concern.

Hayden responded that there was no suggestion that Combe ever took the ‘clandestinity’ suggestion seriously.

“I doubt that he did, because he mentioned to Matheson his hope to secure a

retainer from the Soviet Union,” Hayden said.

The former ALP leader’s arguments did not sway his colleagues. “Eventually the committee decided that Ivanov should be expelled from the country. It was not a decision I supported,” he disclosed to the Royal Commission in camera.

ASIO had achieved its objective, and the Barnett quartet bowed out. Hawke decided they should not be called to the final NISC meeting at 6.30 pm that day. As directed by Hawke ASIO drew up a request for a warrant to interrupt my two phones, private and business. There were factual errors in almost every paragraph of the ASIO request, but Evans signed the warrant the next day.

Hayden said in evidence: “Combe could have been given the opportunity to present his side of the affair before the decisions were taken on April 21. He could have been given the opportunity after Ivanov’s expulsion, or after surveillance stopped.”

But it was decided not to inform me.

The six ministers then decided to blacklist me, to put me out of business.

“There was no possible reason based on security grounds to debar him from access to ministers after Ivanov’s expulsion,” Hayden said in secret evidence.

A LETTER

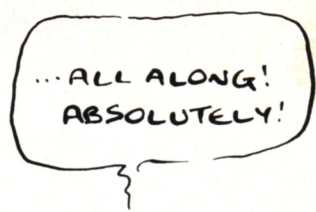
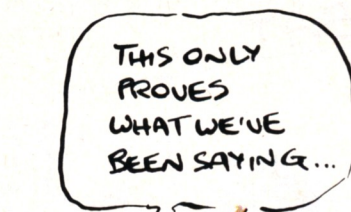
“I think that now most gays are taking a responsible attitude to AIDS and are adopting practices of safer sex. I think that the media has been largely irresponsible in the way that it has sensationalised the issue – the way it implies that homosexuality causes aids, while making no attempt to

educate the wider public to aids as an infectious disease and the way it has alienated the gay community.

If a solution is to be found it is going to take all the resources of straights and gays working together. It’s not just a gay problem: no one wants to die.”

**Signed: William Yang,
Photojournalist.**





THE GREAT...

1940



1970

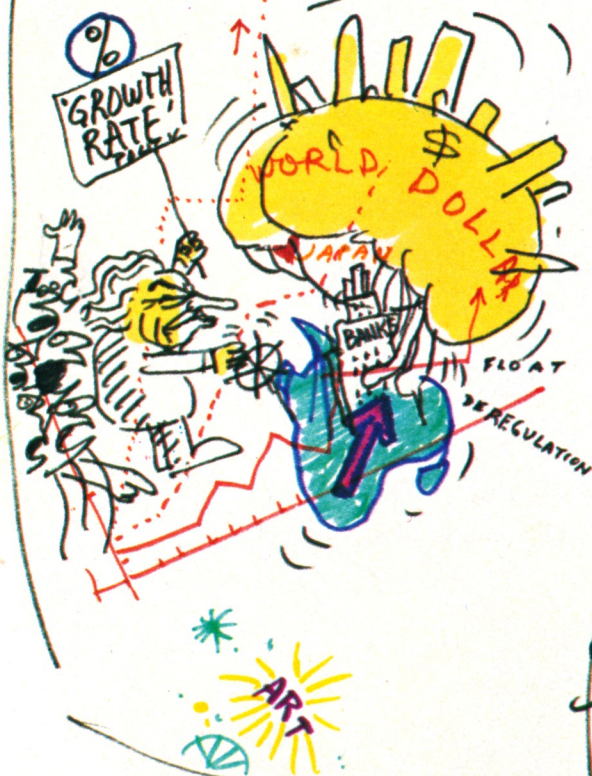


AUSTRALIAN

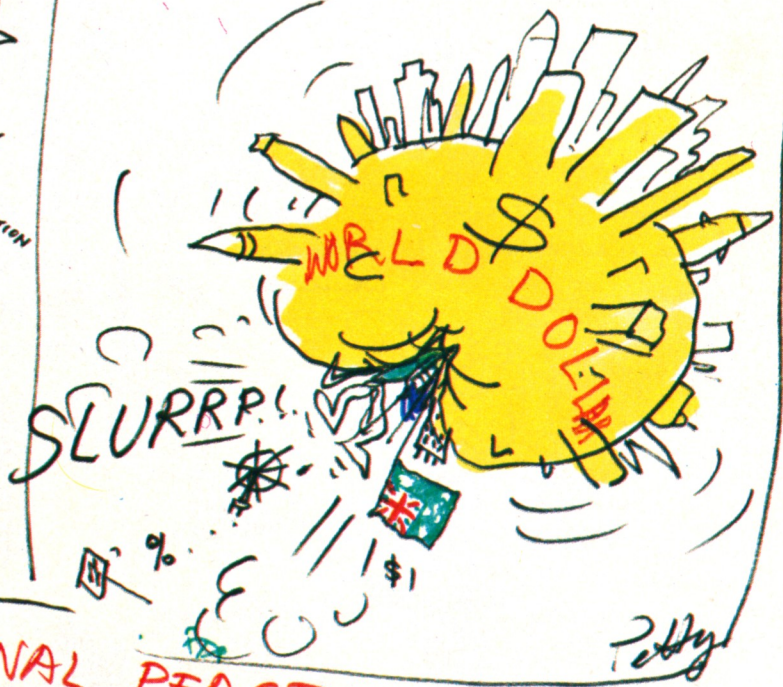
LABOR PARTY

SEARCH

1980



next thing you know...



FOR INTERNAL PEACE
(OR - THE MARKET SUCKS)



John Ogden

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In the wonderful tradition of Ita's Glomesh bag, look what fell out of a federal politician's saddlebags! If you reckon you know the rightful owner of this assorted, incriminating evidence, write to Matilda and let us know. Every tenth winner will receive a free Leunig poster and we'll publish the results in issue number three.



Interview:



Barry Dickens versus Don Watson

Don Watson is a script writer for the 'Gillies' Show' and Barry Dickens is a Melbourne author.

He had pleaded on the telephone. After midnight it was. 'Please interview me,' he'd said. 'I know I'm not the Pope, or David Williamson, or even Kristin Williamson. But haven't I got as much right to be interviewed as anyone? I've just written a book. The Pope's never written a book, has he? Why can't

all Australians be interviewed? I'll interview you, and you can interview my neighbour, Ng - great bloke. And my dog - we can interview him.'

I could see he was getting maudlin and ridiculous, so I consented.

Dickens, as everyone knows, leads a life of sore want and solitude on a Litera-

ture Board grant with his lovely friend Sarah in a lovely little Richmond cottage. There was a fence out the front when I arrived at dawn: the sun's first feeble rays were bouncing off the letterbox into the cream paint of which an amateur hand had scratched 'No. 19'. So this was it. Or was I dreaming?

Dickins pried open the door with a crowbar and greeted me fondly.

'Good morning, Donald,' he said. 'Muggy isn't it?' He took me into his study, a dump.

'Let me show you my Peter Nicholson bust of Joh Bjelke Petersen,' he said. 'Look, the nose fell off it.'

Sure enough, the nose lay on the carpet.

'He just started to cry one night and the nose came right off,' said Dickins.

'Anything else to show me?' I asked.

'The kitchen,' he said.

And that's where it all started.

Watson: Mr Dickins...

Dickins: Please call me Barry, Don.

Watson: No thanks, I don't like Barry as a name.

Dickins: Okay.

Let me come straight to the point.

Feel free. You're in my kitchen after all.

What makes you think you're funny?

I arise and joke.

I notice you don't wash.

There's nothing funny about washing.

That's a pretty feeble answer if you don't mind me saying so.

Bag your head.

How long have you been writing, if you don't mind me asking?

Ever since I got up.

Do you think you're getting better and what makes you think so?

My unshakeable belief in drugs.

So you do believe in something.

Goodness, yes.

Shit beard.

It went weedy in the drought, ragwort mainly. Yours looks spruce, where did you get the seedlings?

Never mind my beard, I'm doing the interview.

Is that what you call it, you bloody fascist.

Let me turn to your drawings. Why do you deny the working class good looks? What about Paul Hogan?

I'm going right off you.

Your latest book, *The Crookes of Epping*, seems to describe an urban jungle. I wonder who influenced you, William Burroughs or Edgar Rice Burroughs?

Rabbit Burroughs, and a little of Wombat Burroughs.

You have been described as zany – constantly. I owe nothing to Zane Grey – not a thing. You owe me ten bucks. Do you ever pay your debts by the way?

Get out!

Your novel is so plainly reminiscent of Patrick White – Voss in particular comes to mind.

No it doesn't.

It does so. Everybody's lost in it – including the author. It's in fact more reminiscent of Voss than Voss itself. Do you see yourself as lost?

How can one know such a thing, I ask you. I may feel lost, yet people find me. I may feel not lost yet people don't know

where I am.

Good point, Barry. Would you like to expand while you offer me that tin of guavas?

Yes, Don. Lost is when you go to the pub and come home with your head all stoved in.

Inferior point, Mr. Dickins. Why are you so bloody sentimental?

Why not?

Well, it's unAustralian. There's something French about it.

What do you mean by sentimental?

I mean mawkish, prolonging the agony, making the audience suffer as much as the heroine; I mean getting off on misery, instead of standing up to the world like a man.

What do you mean by sentimental?

I mean mawkish, prolonging the agony, making the audience suffer as much as the heroine; I mean getting off on misery, instead of standing up to the world like a man.

What do you mean by getting off?

I mean making a welter of it.

Not a handicap?

A welter is a handicap, just a different scale of weights. And you an expert on the racing game!

You haven't read my book.

No. Should I?

It is the thing – the work – I thought which was the object of your curiosity and that of so many, if not all Australians.

Oh. I thought we were meant to talk about life.

I don't know anything about life. I'm a writer.

I'm glad we've established that, but what insufferable pomposity.

I talk to Everyman.

Are there any comedians you admire, apart from yourself I mean? Any living ones – anyone can admire the dead.

Paul Zwouch. I've always admired Paul.

Yes. A very fine writer. What did he write?

A letter to me once a week, which is funny because he just lives down the road.

Yes, I'm familiar with the name.

Of course you are – I just said it.

You are a smart fellow – did the little kids throw rocks at you at school?

My teeth came out Don. Just then.

Are they real false teeth, or are they your own?

The merest peanut spears my gums.

Why do you have such an obsession with your teeth? They are to your work what the aeroplane is to W. E. Johns, with whom you might well be compared – your writing that is, not your flying.

I love to fly – it gives me a sense of perspective.

No doubt you flew about Epping as a child. Would you say your novel is an even vaguely accurate portrayal of life there?

Whitheringly so.

I find that odd. I lived in Epping – I'm sorry, it was in nearby Reservoir – and it was nothing like it. There was a ghost in a brown gaberdine coat who was always in the shower

when I wanted to use it. I find it very hard to believe there were no ghosts in Epping, yet you make no mention of them from what I can gather...

You live, you go down the shop, you purchase blurred Baked Beans, you die. I really don't think it goes very much further than that. A ghost is a very useful friend in Epping, if you're lucky enough to have one. Life in Epping is not as we know it at all, you know. It is more like not knowing anyone in Sydney.

I understand full well. Would you like to offer an opinion of the famous actor, Graham Blundell, who also came from Epping.

He came from Reservoir.

What's the difference.

None.

No sewerage in either?

No sewerage in Epping, but it's always been on in Reservoir.

You're a bloody idiot I reckon.

W. E. Johns didn't have the sewerage on – not in his plane.

Fair enough.

Would you like some BP Zoom?

Let me ask the questions. I see some labourers are knocking up a block of flats out the back.

No they're not.

There are five labourers, big rough-hewn men knocking them up as we speak.

Why five, and not the usual four? And why cream brick veneer? Always cream brick veneer. All my life it's been cream brick veneer.

Look, if you're not enjoying this interview, why don't you leave? Self-aggrandisement is one thing – getting someone else to aggrandise you is another thing altogether.

Okay, I'll leave – though the house be my own.

Good move.

Why don't you go?

Deep down I think you want me to live with you.

Be my guest.

I see then, you want me to live with you. I would, you know, but only if you lived in Sydney.

Fair enough.

How important is cricket in Australian literary life?

I never read them. Parasites. I would prefer to have fleas in the house.

I see you have fleas in the house.

It's not polite to scratch.

I said cricket, not critic.

I savvy. Crucial. Cricket is vital – the very essence of the national experience, though not in Epping. I once played in Sydney. I opened bat for the actors and Alex Buzo bowled me for a duck.

He's a very good bowler, what sort of ball was it?

A good sort.

Have you had many good sorts.

A number.

What's happened to Alex Buzo.

Why did you drop Werner Herzog?

Actually he dropped me.

That's what they all say.



You don't reach out much, do you.
What's he like in bed? Inventive or a plodder?
 He walks all over you.
I don't like your ambiguity.
 He said I had no sense of humour. He did buy my car.
Did it have a roadworthy?
 Certainly not. He's an anarchist. But he found the rust in the tailgate to his liking.
Getting back to the bust-up...
 I miss him more than I can say.
But you're supposed to be good with words.
 We were temperamentally unsuited.
Who are you on with now?
 That's a rude and ugly question. I live a sheltered life. See that shed out there.
 No.
 I live in it. Alone in a Malleys Whirlpool. The wringer is my pillow – these ears are the result of an electrical fault in the middle of the night. I've been through the wringer.
You fuckin' liar.
 Can't you stop scratching? It puts me right off.
You seem nervous.
 It's the heroin.
You fuckin' liar.
 What do you think I am? A mongrel?
Let me get back to your writing. Am I right in discerning the influence of Homere, Goethe and Racine – and your parents?
 You are. I was raised on the Racine Guide as a matter of fact. It was the family Bible, and as for Mum and Dad, they are honest when all the world is not.
How refreshing in these cynical days to hear a child speak mawkishly of its parents. And what about David McNicoll.
 Great moustache on him. No ragwort at all. Like the tail on my dog. A great wag. I intend to grow a moustache like McNicoll's, precisely the right kind of moustache. One of the great communists that man. Bit of a Stalin in him. Bit of Mo.
I notice you are built like the side of a house. Terrace or bungalow?
 More of a cathedral – Notre Dame perhaps.
 I'm not on the Pritikin diet – abalone mainly and pies.
Yes. I notice you just chewed a two dollar sachet of Bai Lin tea – courtesy of the Australia Council I suppose – yet for all your efforts you're still a fat rat.
 Have a can.
I notice you still miss Werner Herzog.
 He just projects his own private fantasies. Why only the other night he gave me a private screening.
So you've gone off David McNicoll, you faithless creep.
 If you're sick of me, why don't you leave?
I notice you're a bit edgy.
 Yes, I am a bit edgy.
Is it the way they're constructing the block of flats out the back?
 It's not my place to comment on architects. All humanity is my brother.
Tell me about that great trauma in your life.

Those who know you well suspect it caused more damage than you care to admit to.
 Yes, I lost my thumb.
Bullshit, you've still got both of them.
 I had three. Hang on. I notice the back fence just fell over.
 No it didn't.
 Yes it did. It's always doing it.
Come on, tell us about the trauma in your life.
 It's all over with Werner Herzog I tell you.
The time you were electrocuted.
 Okay, I was a signwriter at the time – an apprentice – we were doing some huge spark plugs, five storeys high when the pincer shorted and I fell. I was clinically dead for the best part of a weekend.
Good heavens – an entire Sunday morning.
 Are you alive now?
 I don't like life and death questions. Get out.
Are your teeth bothering you again?
 Did you know I once did a line drawing of Jesus Christ for the War Cry?
How did it come out?
 I got ten bob for it.
How intriguing. What sort of felt pen did you use? And what reference?
 Hebrews 12.
But that's the Old Testament.
 It was a long time ago.
God, my neck's playing up again. It's gone all wonky.
 I miss doing things like that. Contributing weekly drawings on religious subjects.
What did they say about your drawing of Jesus?
 Nothing like him.
This neck is killing me.
 He's very hard to draw. The eyes are the hard part.
I've always found the eyes the easiest part.
Elucidate will you.
 I tend to see things as they are.
Have you ever dropped lysergic acid?
 What does that imply, Don?
That you are a complete freak.
 Here, have a limpet mine.
I just put one out. To get back to the teeth, would you say that they are in a real sense a motif of your work. Or do you wish you'd said it?
 My teeth are a symbol of the drop in membership of the Australian Communist Party.
Let me ask you one final question.
 At last. Thank God. Fire away, Don.

Do you have any difficulty with the truth?
 The truth is rather like getting out of bed in the morning.
It depends on how you're feeling at the time?
 Correct. Yes and no.
Just as I thought Barry – you're a part-time bullshit artist.
 Leonardo was also an inventor. Watt invented the steam engine but would you deny it's essential truth. Then there is rust-proof wheat by Farrer. The singlet by Bond. What other inventions are there? There must be others.
You're right and I'm sorry if you inferred from my remarks that I think your work is even one wit inferior to any of the great men you have mentioned.
 Would you like a Brazil nut?
 No.
 No what?
 No fuckin' way.
 You're truly hilarious.
Let me ask you a final question.
 No thank you. I've had it.
Fair enough Barry.
 I'd give you a lift but I gave my Holden to the Vietnamese family across the road.
What'd they give you for it?
 Two dozen large bottles.
 Really?
 And truly. You can have them. I'm on a diet.
 Gee.
 You see Don, that is what life is all about.
 Are you going now?

And so I left. Barry carried both cartons to the boot of my car. 'Nice boot,' he said. 'It's not a boot,' I said. 'Station wagons like this don't have boots.'

'You're right,' he said. 'If it were a boot it would have a tongue, whereas this is a void – not even any teeth. I suppose you'd say that life is like the void in the back of a station wagon,' I said. 'Thank Christ,' I thought.

The sun was low in the west. It was dusk in Richmond. 'It's dusk in Richmond,' said Barry. I could not repress a groan. 'I think I'll go and catch a carp for my tea,' said Dickins. 'Please yourself,' I said – and drove quickly away.

In the rear vision mirror I glimpsed a workman fall from the block of flats, and heard Dickins shout 'I notice you've just fallen from that block of flats you've been building out the back!' 



S. M. C. 'es.

AUSTRALIA UNMANNED

a worried letter to the demoralized

Put yourself in my position. After forty-seven hours in the air – my tongue a mere tool for scouring tin-foil, the Macquarie Dictionary with which I polish up the patois stained with long life milk – I finally made it off the plane at Tullamarine, ordered a cab to get me straight to the ground, grabbed a programme, a floppy hat and the Four-and-Twenty I'd been promising myself since I was last here, peeled off my shirt, flicked a gob of toothpaste on my nose, pushed my way to the front of Bay 13, and blow me if the first Australian to drop a catch didn't turn out to be wearing a pigtail. A pigtail! Will it surprise you to hear that for a moment or two I wondered if Garuda had left me in Ho Chi Minh City?

Now you know why I have taken the unusual step of writing to you. I'm anxious about you. I won't go so far as to use the word emasculated, but you don't strike me as being the blokes you once were.

Look, I don't mind the tears. I believe in a good cry myself. One of the reasons I come out here, for God's sake, is to weep buckets over cold beer in the company of old mates. A shout and a sob at the bar, a pot and a pule, a threat and a threnody – let's face it, to a compulsive re-visitor like me, that's what Australia is all about.

But to do it on television! To do it in Parliament House! To do it in front of journalists! Aren't there enough pubs in Australia?

Mark my words, the minute you start dropping them for the media (tears I'm talking about) everyone is going to want a go. Already I can see the kids have picked it up. Red eyes, wet cheeks, smears shirts, knees gone to jelly – just like us. Jesus, you old bastards, don't you see? – the sheilas will be getting in on it next.

(According to my Macquarie Dictionary, sheilas is O.K. And it suggests a scope that wives and mistresses wouldn't.)

Which brings me to another worry. What's all this I'm hearing about legalized brothels and compulsory prostitution? I was whimpering on a bloke's shoulder the other afternoon – he'd been snivelling on mine all morning – when he told me about the new legislation. What he reckons is that there's to be an official rooting register introduced any day now, and that every adult male over the age of eighteen will have to sign on at the local seraglio three times a year (four when they bring in semesters) and do the necessary.

by Howard Jacobson



Illustration by Steven Axelson

No excuses, no exemptions.

You won't even be allowed to get a mate to stand in for you if you're sick. Non-transferable you'll be, like a tram ticket.

What's going on out here? Since when was it necessary for the State to intervene? There was no Department for Mooting Rooting needed when I was last over. It happened spontaneously enough, some time after lunch, once the sobbing had subsided. There was never any question of coercion. In fact, unless my memory's playing me tricks, the problem for the State was how to curb it not encourage it.

But there you are, you see. Look what happens when there's interference with the mysterious processes of Nature. We unlink the Great Chain at our peril. The world's reserves of vital moisture were reduced when the great South American rain forests were hacked down. Play around with the great Australian male, tamper with the free flow of his fluids, and who knows what deserts will be left. Groans of enforced sexual ecstasy in the LaTrobe Valley, cricketers with pigtails – these are just the beginning. And I have not even begun to speak of RAIDS.

RAIDS (Revulsion from Australian Intelligence and Detection Syndrome) was virtually unheard of on my last visit. It was part of the excitement, then, won-

dering who was going to drop in on one unexpectedly. Perhaps tie one up and go through one's papers. Now RAIDS has reached epidemic proportions, especially amongst the Gab communities of Australian capital cities, that's to say those who like to indulge in long garrulous and uninterrupted meals in metropolitan hotels, and such members of the press and media who get their thrills from talking endlessly on the telephone but kick up a stink the minute somebody bothers to listen. There is no known cure for the suspicion all RAIDS victims suffer that groups of armed desperadoes in funny masks are going to shoot up their entrées once they've copied out their conversation.

It is of course necessary, faced with a spiritual catastrophe of this unprecedented enormity, to stay calm. And be prepared to concede that the Queensland Government reacted precipitously when it promised to starve to death anyone with RAIDS found eating in a public place, and to cut off the lips of any carrier caught ringing up a minor. But the telephone and the restaurant table, being susceptible to what desperate health officials have called 'certain social practices', are the prime means by which the disease is transmitted. In the name of humanity then, can we not say this about RAIDS sufferers? – that since their illness is a morbid fear of being overheard they should not, for their own sakes, be permitted the luxury of saying anything.

A vow of silence, such as is enjoined upon some by no means unhappy monastic orders, would ensure if not a cure, at least some respite from the disease. The ripping out of the telephone, the excision of all traces of the carrier's name from the directory, and regular random visits from one of ASIS's welfare agents, aimed at acclimatising the patient to all forms of surprise invasion and blitzkrieg, would also bring relief.

So much for the victims. But what about you, my old mates, for whom privacy was always just another name for squeamishness? Can I go home confident that you'll stay immune from the contagion breathing all around you? Despite strong proofs to the contrary I entertain the fancy that you'll be right. I can't really believe that when your date comes up for duty at the Benalla bawdyhouse and every Internal Security Agent in the country suddenly descends upon you, in flagrante, on a practise run – I can't really believe that you will have forgotten how to blubber, just as you did in the good old days, like a man.

Now RAIDS has reached epidemic proportions, especially amongst the Gab communities...

A baited Trap in the Year of the Rat

How many people at this moment recall, or care, that not so long ago the first fly ever to venture into outer space perished aboard the Soviet Soyuz T-12?

Millenia from now wide-eyed children on Mars will hear the tale of how, on discovering their stowaway, the cosmonauts adopted and named her "Mookha" (with the *k* very soft and emphasis on *h*).

By consensus it was decided that a fly of such astral ambition as this should by no means suffer the indignity of the specimen jar. So Mookha winged it weightlessly free.

She proved herself a true comrade of the stars, shouldering her share of the awe and sadness. And you cannot but believe that this is the way she would have preferred to go.

When they returned to earth, her fellow cosmonauts spoke of her with pride and sadness. And you cannot but believe that this is the way she would have preferred to go.

Somewhere up there (a little to the left, say, of the Southern Cross) the frail but indomitable molecules and DNA that were, in a particular assembly, the cosmonaut Mookha are, in another manifestation, part of the greater universe, and nearer to the stars which were her dream and aspiration and undoing.

Yes, in the end that's what 1984 will be remembered for – as the year of the martyrdom of Mookha, the first fly in space. She whose name should rightly be given to that newfound planet in the constellation Ophichius – the first ever discovered outside our solar system.

You might well say that, as for Doomsday, 1984 was a bummer. But not to worry! The cassandra voices are already raised with reassuring declaration that soon, the Year of The Rat will get *really* rotten.

Take this fella Lindsay Hunter of Perth, who earns a crust by way of sooth-saying the stock exchange. ("Market analyst and futures trader" is the official euphemism.)

Lindsay (known as "Laughing Boy" to his friends) says with a deal of gloomy relish the world will plunge into a great depression in April-May. Which leaves us not all that much bloody time to go, does it?

A period of doom and disaster is about to hit. You could survive by taking out large unsecured loans or dealing in either drugs, booze, fuel or tucker. But for the country lads, worse is to come.

John Hepworth reports.

He says there'll be a great boom on Wall Street... then the arse will fall out of everything.

Within the hour there won't be a washroom unspattered with the blown-out brains of some financial genius. And plump stockbrokers will be diving from the high windows in droves – to splatter on the sidewalks like overripe melons.

And it will be the same dreadful pattern as 1929: *Today Wall Street – tomorrow the world.*

Except, says Hunter, that this one will make the Thirties depression look like the good old days.

He adds that "the government will probably attempt to drain the wealth and assets of people, families and businesses by as many means as possible."

And while you might well shrug and say "So what would be new?" he goes on to paint a picture of bankrupt banks and labour camps for the masses of unemployed. (Up to 50 percent of the workforce is the happy guess.)

It will be the bosses' day again – the workers' day will be done. Massive wage cuts and foreclosed mortgages and evic-

tions and hunger and degradation will be coming like the rising of the sun.

Enough to cause widespread alarm and despondency you might think. But remember, there's mugs and smarties. And the smarty will always not only survive but make a quid in the most terrible of times.

The good word from our soothsayer is that the thing to do is to build up a supply of hard cash – by taking out unsecured personal loans if you can manage it. And it would help a lot if you could get in early on what will become the flourishing blackmarket in stuff like drugs, booze, fuel and tucker.

Remember! The crunch can be expected in April-May, and the danger sign will be when the Dow Jones industrial average peaks between 1500 and 1700.

At any hour after that it will plunge – maybe as low as 200 – dragging the world down with it to disaster.

But bear in mind what we told you about survival. Remember to build up what Lindsay Hunter rather charmingly terms "a store of physical dollars". All you need to ride out the deepest depression is lots of lolly.

You might think that prophecy of doom and disaster quite enough in the Year of The Rat. But more, and in a way even worse, is to come.

Lord knows you must, even as I, be worried sick about the future of fornication.

It's not all that long ago that the mainspring of life was the constant search for what was laughingly known as "the elusive Donald". But first herpes, and more lately AIDS, has knocked the hell out of the grand old sport.

Why I've even heard of people going on an Oriana island cruise and, because of apprehension, coming back unscrewed after 12 days and 13 nights in the langorous ambience of the South Pacific.

And now, what might seem to be the final blow. AIDS has been discovered in sheep!

What will Ian McCahon Singlare say? Ian and his sturdy redneck kind who understand God's strictures against Sodom and whose eyes light up with extra fervor when they sing that grand old hymn: "We like sheep..." 



John Ogden

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MATILDA



Reading between the lines...

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Palace of Air Marshall Ky.



War orphans.



American communications equipment at Vung Tau.



Main street of Baria.

One of the reasons that the media coverage of the Indochina war was often bad was that the only people in possession of an overall picture of what was happening were the military leadership of each side.

In Cambodia, the government of Marshal Lon Nol (supported by the US, the Saigon Government and Australia) provided a spokesman for the High Command who deserves a place in history. His name was Captain Amrong, dutifully promoted to Colonel for his efforts.

In the early months of the Cambodian war in 1969, newsmen died as a result of incorrect information given by the High Command spokesman, who remained steadfastly true to his

name throughout his career.

Amrong was a charming, cultivated man, with twinkling eyes and a ready smile and a liking for French classical music. His chief qualification as military spokesman was that he had been a film director for the deposed Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who produced epic extravaganzas magnifying the glories of the Khmer people and recreating the grandeur that was once the empire of Angkor.

Amrong served his new masters with the same flair for creative imagination. His other qualification was that he spoke no English, which equipped him perfectly to answer questions from a foreign press corps composed largely of Americans, British, Australians and Japanese. But his French was excellent,

and he had an official interpreter, Channing Song, a sensitive intellectual and a poet of some reputation. A former beneficiary of Prince Sihanouk's patronage, he now stood before the foreign press each day and conscientiously translated the ringing declarations of the High Command, crushing victory after crushing victory, enemy rout after enemy rout – most of it exaggerated, if not invented. But cracks began to appear in his official facade of boundless confidence as the Lon Nol Government's situation got worse.

After one particularly victorious briefing, Song quietly approached a group of us and muttered, "For God's sake, can anyone get me out of this country?"

Ten Years After

This year is the tenth anniversary of the American defeat in Indochina. Saigon fell to the communists on June 30, 1975. Phnom Penh had welcomed the victorious Khmer Rouge on April 17. Australian media consumers – you – are about to be bombarded with The Vietnam War Revisited, in every form from TV documentaries and re-enactments to scholarly books and rock songs.

William Pinwill who reported from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos for the ABC between 1968 and 1972, suggests some signposts to help assess the information avalanche.



A turning point in the Vietnam War, so the conventional wisdom goes, was a CBS television news story on on August 3, 1965, when staff correspondent Morley Safer reported the burning of a South Vietnamese village, Cam Ne, by US Marines. It included a memorable scene of a Marine setting a hut on fire with his cigarette lighter. One hundred and fifty Vietnamese peasant homes were levelled because of reported sniper fire from the area.

Morley Safer ended his piece: "There is little doubt that American firepower can win a military victory here. But to a Vietnamese peasant whose home means a lifetime of backbreaking labour, it will take more than Presidential promises to convince him that we are on his side."

President Lyndon B. Johnson promptly got on the phone to Frank Stanton, the president of the CBS network.

"Boy, your man just shat on the American flag," he said in his blunt Texan fashion. "Did you know that Mr Safer is a Communist?"

"No sir," Stanton replied. "He's not a Communist; he's a Canadian."

Unfazed, LBJ responded, "Well, I knew he wasn't an American."

After two weeks of intense White House and Pentagon pressure, the network ran a very upbeat report from Safer singing the praises of a US operation at Tam Quan.

"Marine casualties were the casualties of all-out war," he emphasised. There was a single passing reference to "the inevitable civilian suffering." Safer's report was followed by an optimistic analysis of how the US was really winning the war by diplomatic correspondent Marvin Kalb (who later co-authored a sympathetic biography of Henry Kissinger).

It was the second CBS report, not the first, that was typical of TV coverage of Vietnam, but the myth has persisted that it was television that "lost the war". While this myth has given comfort to the politicians and generals responsible for the Western intervention in Indochina, it does not stand up to scrutiny.

Robert Elegant, who wrote for the Los Angeles Times before he turned to fulltime blockbuster fiction, launched an attack on his former colleagues in the magazine *Encounter*. "For the first time in modern history," he asserted, "the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield but on the printed page and, above all, on the television screen."

The truth is somewhat simpler. It was put neatly by Peer De Silva, former station chief for the CIA in Vietnam (and later Australia), in his otherwise boring autobiography: "We disengaged from the war – because we were clearly losing it."

The Americans doing the actual fighting knew this. Their friends and relatives back home learned it not from TV, but from the inexorable procession of body-bags and maimed GIs returning to the towns of Middle America. According to the US Veterans Administration, 57,002 American servicemen died in Vietnam (including 381 official suicides), and 303,704 were wounded. Five years ago, Veterans Administration hospitals were treating 30,000 Vietnam vets for alcoholism and 12,000 for addiction to hard drugs. More than 1.7 million have some type of mental readjustment problem.

There is evidence that TV coverage of the war actually bred a tolerance of horror and blood. Polls by the Louis Harris

can, pro-communist and at the very least – in the parlance of the time – "doves". Mr Elegant states in his *Encounter* article, "Most correspondents were partisans for Hanoi."

The truth is somewhat more boring and less conspiratorial. To continue reporting the war and stay sane, most correspondents tended to suspend their critical faculties. It has always been a feature of war reporting. "We were witnesses, not judge and jury", said the New Zealand-born doyen of Vietnam war correspondents, Peter Arnett of Associated Press. They did not see it as their job to speculate on ethics or morality, right or wrong.

The impact of the war was such that most people who arrived as doves became more hawkish; while those who had never doubted "My country right or wrong" became more dovish. As Gavin Young of the London Observer put it, in 1966, most correspondents "finally levelled out into a guardedness, somewhere in between."

Hanoi's propaganda was not the reason why a few honest, perceptive and patriotic reporters from America started to criticise their government. In fact South Vietnam was the last place in the world you could be exposed to North Vietnam's version of the war. No, the reason was that they felt their government was betraying them – and the public trust – by its continual lying about the war.

The most spectacular, and influential, case of conversion was the *eminence grise* of American television, Walter Cronkite. The CBS anchor-man had been conned and snowed by US Air Force generals on a visit to Saigon in 1965. After the 1968 Tet offensive, when "enemy" troops penetrated the main cities of the South, including Saigon, and even briefly occupied the United States Embassy, Cronkite discovered he had been deceived. In a CBS Special, he declared it was time for the US to think about getting out of the war. This was hardly a novel or even radical sentiment by 1968 – four months earlier, 50,000 Americans had rallied at the Lincoln Memorial in the most violent dissent America had seen since the Civil War.

But when President Johnson saw the Cronkite program, he told his Press Secretary it was a turning point. If he had lost Walter Cronkite, he had lost the average citizen. Soon after, he announced he would not seek re-election. Within 18 months, the anti-war movement drew 250,000 Americans to a single rally at the Washington Monument.

It was not Walter Cronkite who "lost the Vietnam War"; the war lost Cronkite and the rest of Middle America. Then came the US invasion of Cambodia, and the student killings at Kent State Univer-



It is still regurgitated by the apologists for US policy, including a number of "distinguished" journalists. The Australian writer Dennis Warner declared in the September 1982 issue of *Pacific Defence Reporter*: "The Vietnam War was not lost in the paddy fields and jungles of South East Asia but in the lounge rooms of millions of American homes."

organisation published in *Newsweek* in 1967 and 1972 showed that television viewing induced or reinforced support for the war in America.

The philosophy of shooting the messenger who brings bad news also embraces the myth that the Western journalists and photographers in Vietnam were mostly radical, anti-Ameri-

sity, the disclosure of the My Lai massacre – and by 1972 it was only arms manufacturers, ideologues, and the McMahon Government that supported the war.

It was interesting to hear Ronald Reagan, during his successful campaign to wrest the Presidency from the limp arms of Jimmy Carter, refer to the Vietnam War as "a noble cause." He strongly implied that victory would have been possible if only "our government" had not been "afraid... to win."

The revisionist histories and remakes of the war tumbling out this year will echo the Reagan line, playing down American brutality and reviving the spectre of an American "victory" if enough firepower – or even nuclear weapons – had been used.

General Westmoreland, former US commander in Saigon, may have been right when he said, "Nothing happened in Vietnam that didn't happen in other wars." Or in the words of Alexander de Conde, professor of history at the University of California, "I don't see the Vietnam war as something unique in our history. Much of what happened in the Vietnam war is about as American as apple pie."

What some correspondents came to realise was that the main buttress of the Western effort in Indochina was racism. American and Australian troops were

sustained by an ethnocentric hatred, mixed with a most misplaced contempt; for the dinks, slope-heads (slopes) and noggies they were fighting. De-humanising the enemy is a standard technique for persuading mostly decent men to indiscriminately murder fellow human beings. The trouble with the Vietnamese (unlike the fang-toothed, myopic, cowardly Jap of World War Two) was that they were our allies as well as our enemies. So the Western defenders of the Saigon Government were encouraged to view Vietnamese people as a whole with the same hatred and contempt they felt for enemy troops. In a historical sense, this was true: the US

"Much of what happened in the Vietnam War is about as American as apple pie"

was fighting the Vietnamese people.

In reality, the Western troops were living among these same people, dependent on them for a range of economic, military and social services. It is difficult to underestimate the effect on teenage minds (the average age of Americans who served in Vietnam was 19) of the perpetual requirement to distrust any Vietnamese, whether he or she is cooking your food, cleaning your quarters, sharing your bed, or providing logistic support for your unit.

Robert Elegant displays one form of American racism when he writes of his "smouldering anger (which sometimes flares into frenzy) at the Vietnamese who were always difficult, regularly evasive, and routinely deceitful." He explains this stereotyping by pointing out that, "No Vietnamese ever really trusted any other Vietnamese except those within his immediate family (and them neither invariably nor wholly)."

It might be thought that this characteristic would inhibit co-operative military effort – so how come the Vietnamese won? There is an Elegant answer: "Never before Vietnam had the collective policy of the media – no less stringent term will serve – sought, by graphic and unremitting distortion, the victory of the enemies of the correspondents' own side." Not only did the media lose the war but it was the result of an actual media conspiracy. (And they reckon the left are conspiracy-minded!)

A full and true history of the Second Indochina War would take many years and much hindsight to compile, and this year's offerings are likely to lack perspective. Perhaps, as Michael Herr once said, "Conventional language could no more describe this war than conventional firepower could win it." Maybe the Vietnam War awaits its novelist.

(Continued from page 13.)

by the doctors' skills.

In the doctors' fantasy, sperm and ova shall be anonymous; no messy adulterous relationships and multiple parentings will occur. Only the professionals will know who anybody really is, and they, like priests in the confessional, will never tell. Old-fashioned lawyers, like Lord Denning, will muse that a child has a right to know its "real" parents, even though it was English law until recently that adopted children could not be told who their biological parents were and many children know less than their mothers about their "real" father. It is the English law that a father cannot legitimise his own child except by legally adopting it, but many thousands of children have been legitimate simply because no-one knew any better. Since time immemorial sisters have borne children for their sisters and servant girls for their mistresses, but *homo occidentalis* now thinks such rich confusion unhealthy, clinging to a notion of the "normal", "nuclear", "heterosexual" family which will be realised by fewer and fewer people. Just as blastocysts created by doctors have an artificial status never accorded to their ilk before, families constructed by medical technology are required to display seamless perfection and high levels of consumption.

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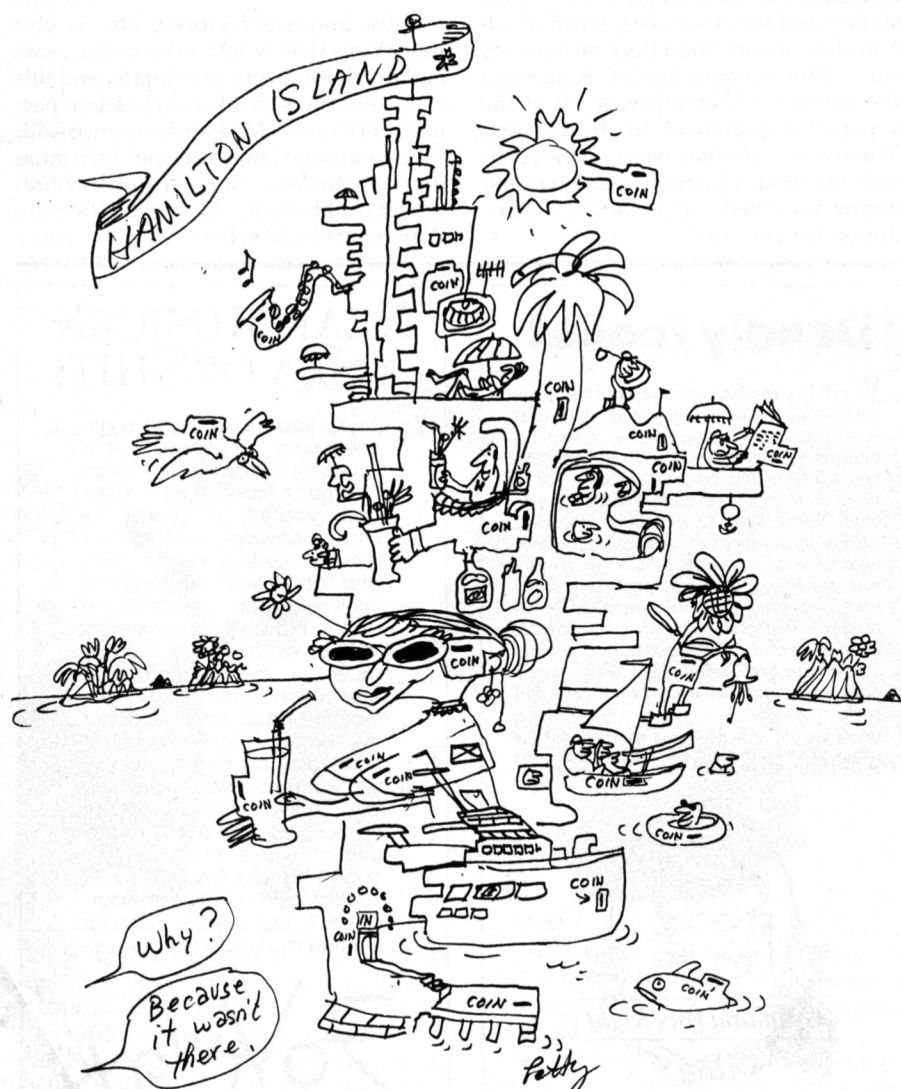
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GEORGE HARRISON MEETS GOD IN QUEENSLAND

by Peter Ellingsen



Why do it? Having made a fortune from Seaworld, the Disneyland of the Gold Coast, why keep pushing for more? Why take on a whole island, for god-sake, in the middle of the Whitsundays and try and turn it into an upmarket Club Med?

I couldn't figure it out. Keith Williams was 55, worth more than \$50 million and in line for a touch on the shoulder from Her Majesty, courtesy of his good mate, Sir Joh. He didn't need the money or the glory. He could lie back in the sun, play with his expensive toys, and still be talked about at nouveau riche Surfers' Paradise dinner parties.

But instead of sipping Moët from the back seat of a chauffeured limo like any other Queensland millionaire, here he was, tape measure on his belt and monacle round his neck, bumping along a dusty road in a white, Mitsubishi Pajero.

"I could be driving a Rolls around the island," he says as we pull up in front of a split level mansion that will soon be his home. "But I don't. I use a four wheel drive because it's practical." Being practical is something Mr Williams knows all about. He left school at 14, does not have time to read books and believes that "common sense" can solve everything. Five years ago, while better-educated men were investing in a failing Gold Coast market, he persuaded the Queensland Government to lease him Hamilton Island for 99 years at the peppercorn rental of \$6450.

The deal to virtually give away the 548 hectare grazing property off the Mackay coast caused a few raised eyebrows at the time, but only until the enterprise earned the sanctity of success.

No one in the Sunshine State likes to look sideways at winners, particularly when they affect a Bryan Brown sense of ocker bravado and a Wild Bill Hickock Style of capitalism.

So Williams went ahead and constructed his dream with a bit of help from Ansett who shared the cost of the island's \$11 million jet runway.

Already he has spent close to \$100 million, building luxury accommodation for 300 people, Australia's largest (1.8 million litre) swimming pool, a Fijian-style hotel and lots of other Hollywood-type excesses that tourists seem to enjoy.

The \$200,000 units are being sold as fast as the 220 construction workers can build them, and a Hawaii-type city resort for 3000 by 1988 is envisaged. All this will cost around \$200 million and make Hamilton, in the words of Williams' deputy, John Menzies, "bigger than the Gold Coast". For those wealthy enough to go along for the ride, there will be trips on the \$1.5 million Quick Cat, evenings in front of two white grand pianos, over-

seas entertainment and 30 cent newspapers on sale for 90 cents.

Most of all though, there will be the chance to rub shoulders with the movers and shakers from Toorak and Rose Bay. As one businessman told me sitting beside one of the island's six swimming pools: "When people think you're a potential penthouse owner (they cost between \$475,000 and \$750,000) their attitude changes." During my two day stay, Alan (the Mo of Mojo Advertising) was dining with Mike ('Up There Cazaly') Brady, and Ansett boss Sir Peter Abeles was flying in to confer with his mate Keith.

But like any personal fiefdom, The Island That Keith Built has its quirks, chief among which is the feudal-like power exercised by Williams himself. A man well aware of the vice regal status Queenslanders afford to those with their own airstrip, Williams has insisted that there be no vehicles on the island, save those he sanctions. With no police or bureaucracy on the resort, Mr Williams (whose aviation call sign Gold Oscar Delta or GOD has provided a cherished nickname) appears to say what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. If he thinks you are out of line, you're on the next plane back to the mainland. Want to buy one of the luxury units now under construction overlooking Catseye beach? It looks a good deal. The smart money, including Lang Hancock and Alan Bond, is interested and similar condos snapped up for \$168,000 are now selling for \$220,000 plus. Well sure, assuming your credit is good and providing that Mr Williams approves. No divine nod, no foothold in elite city.

That's the way it is on Cocos, oops Hamilton Island, and GOD is not apologising. "Since I don't use anyone else's money but my own (his is a private company), I'm entitled to make my own decisions," he says. "I'm entitled to do things which others may have difficulty justifying."

This is because what he does is of course "for the good of everyone".

"If you go out and build a big enough factory, you determine who drives the bloody forklift and who drives the vehicle," he says. And what, to go back to the original question, motivates him?

"I do it for the self-satisfaction," GOD observes as we stroll over marble floors and past bars of Tasmanian oak in his 98 square house. The site affords a commanding view of the half-complete luxury resort, but Williams, his trademark pith helmet on his balding head, hasn't got time to look. He leaps back into the Pajero without even mentioning the BELL Longranger helicopter that slides out on a James Bond-type electric pad or the \$750,000 yacht in the harbor below.

There is a pistol range in the basement but he doesn't want to talk about that, or

"I do it for the self-satisfaction," GOD observes as we stroll over marble floors and past bars of Tasmanian oak.

the nearby villa site purchased by former Beatle George Harrison for a rumoured \$300,000. In fact, both Mr Williams and his well-trained staff are at pains to keep the resort's image as squeaky clean as its white sandy beach. With prospective buyers being shuttled on and off the island every day, and Hamilton's real estate appreciating faster than most capital cities, there is no room for detractors.

Which is why, after two days of terribly polite but awfully repetitive sight-seeing with island staff, I was happy to stumble into big Bob Benson, Williams' chief of construction.

Breasting the bar of the Mariner's Inn on the harbor, or blue collar side of Hamilton, Benson was celebrating his 45th birthday and had a few things to say about the boss.

"I've had to swallow my pride to work for him, but the money has been good, so I've stayed," he says. "He's a hard man to work with - he's an optical engineer."

Benson, who was project manager at Gove and Ord River before joining Mr Williams, claims there is a "lot of segregation on the island" between guests and workers.

"I don't feel it, but the men do," he says. "They feel like second class citizens. The way the management sees it, construction workers shouldn't mix with house guests."

Bob Benson has his Mercedes and his investments and plans to retire soon, so he's not worrying too much.

Like the thorough workman he is,

he'll finish the job first. "I got a telex today," he says as we sip beer at the bar. "It's from George (Harrison) - he wants me to build him a house on the island for \$600,000." Bob Benson smiles, and says he is sure he can oblige.

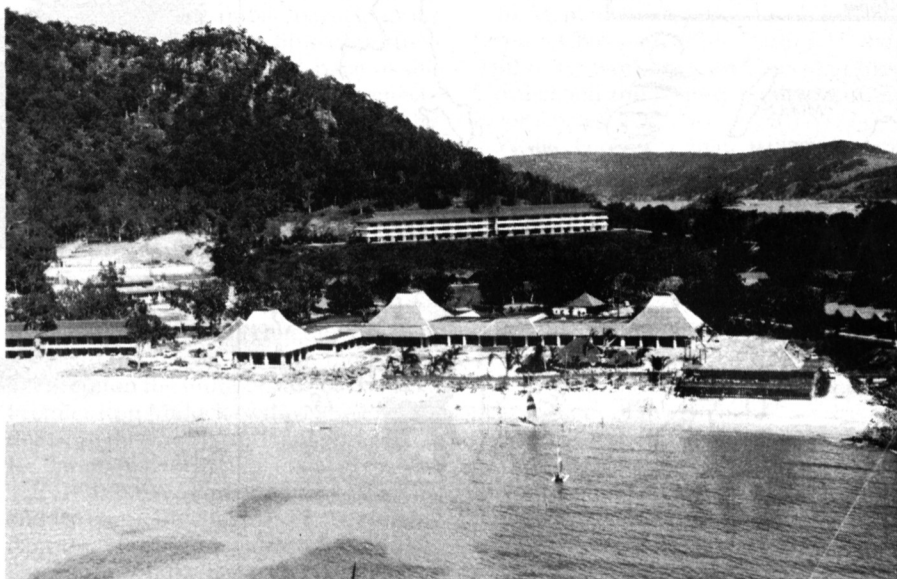
The idea of an aging Beatle hiding out on five acres of secluded luxury is just the sort of touch that Hamilton Island needs to complete its St Tropes image.

While it is true that casual guests can rent out more than comfortable accommodation on the island for less than \$100 per day, many of the patrons are plugging for a more serious commitment.

"We're building an up-market Mediterranean type of resort for the jet-setters on the north west tip of the island," Steve Terry, Hamilton's host explains. If that isn't exclusive enough, you can pay up to \$400,000 for a five acre villa site close to the Harrison compound. But there's only one left so you'll have to be quick. If this all seems like something William Randolph Hearst dreamed up, don't turn to island staff for elucidation. Terry, like the other 180 Williams' employees, exhibits extreme loyalty towards the boss.

"I guest it's a challenge," is how he explains his part of the Williams' dream. "Keith is a truly amazing man. I remember him standing here in 1978 saying 'I'm going to build the biggest pool in Australia' and he did it."

Terry who's 34 and has worked his way up from barman to VIP guide, has had plenty of time to watch Williams work and says, "Keith can do every single little thing." He remembers Williams berating a gardener for trying to plant a palm tree in the wrong shaped hole. "You don't dig round holes for palm trees, it has got to be dug square; that's what he said, and he got down and dug it himself," Terry recalls. "He's unbelievable."



Heaven.

There was a definite locker-room atmosphere in the construction office when I finally tracked Keith Williams down for a formal interview. A leggy redhead sat behind a desk in the outer office, while the boss poured over plans with architect Roger Parkin in the inner sanctum. Parkin, who believes the "old man can be demanding and proud", later explained that he and Williams' deputy, John Menzies, "take a low profile deliberately to let Keith do the talking".

Close up, the king of Fantasy Island is deeply tanned, clean shaven and though not heavily built or tall, seems to radiate a low slung bulk that demands both space and attention. When I showed him a newspaper cutting in which he speculated on being a genius, he chuckled and said, "Well, I guess I'm a genius. No, well that's what development is all about, what everything is about. Some people rise and fall on their own merit".

The Williams style of jockstrap enterprise, something he himself calls an "art form", is like the sport of water skiing in which he initially made his name (as a champion skier) and his fortune (running Queensland's first ski gardens in 1957). It's something you do alone, with an adoring crowd applauding at a discreet distance. While not limited to Queensland, this way of making myth and money works best in the Deep North. John Menzies says of his boss,

"he's driven by will and ego. My fear for a long time was that he'd believe his own publicity, but there's no sign of it".

Williams himself says, "my reputation means more today to me than anything else". It is not, he says, the cars, the yachts or the champagne that keep him getting out of bed at six a.m. It's not even the money. After all, what's the difference between having 20 or 40 million dollars?

After all, what's the difference between having 20 or 40 million dollars?

"Any fool can set up a business and lose money," he says. "When it comes to making money, I'm only interested in one thing, and that's making money as a measure of success."

So the great god success wins again. Just lob the dart in the bullseye and everyone will smile benignly, adjust their Halston ties and reach across for more champers. It's a morality that's as old as the moneychangers in the temple and as effective as Russ Hinze.

Graham Greene tried to deal with the phenomenon in his recent book, "Dr Fischer of Geneva or the bomb party", in which the protagonist shoots himself after failing to exhaust the avarice of the wealthy.

If Graham Greene couldn't explain why they do it, how do you expect me to?

by Wanda Roxoff

It was a reunion for the Who Was Who at the official opening of what's becoming known as the Maui of Australia - Hamilton Island.

The boy from Tenterfield, Peter Allen was there as was the former Beatle-turned-film producer, George Harrison. And it was clear that the two were not the best of buddies.

George made no secret of his feelings towards Liza Minelli's former husband when Allen put on a jock-strap ringing performance for the invitation-only throng which included Russ Hinze and spouse, Joh and Flo and other assorted private jet and helicopter owners. Sir Peter Ables and his wife Kitty looked decidedly uncomfortable.

Harrison, who owns a 'block of land' on the island, heckled and talked throughout Allen's performance and went so far to suggest that our boy on the piano in the white satin pants couldn't sing.

Also on Hamilton Island were Deep Purple revival members, Ian Paich and Jon Lord. In heat that seldom went below 30 degrees, Paich was seen in leather pants and high-heeled boots. George Harrison seemed to hit it off a little better with the Purples. When they did Sydney, he joined them in an old-fashioned jam on stage.



Paradise reclaimed.



G.O.D.

The Premier meets trouble on the waterfront

David Halpin

One of the most cancerous, soul-blackening ways for a citizen of NSW to slide despairingly into the political year is contemplation of what Premier Nifty Neville Wran, QC, Ph.D, in Cosmetic Politics, Victim of The Age tapes, has in store for the corruption-wracked masses in 1985.

Trying to predict Nifty's political scenario has always been a dodgy caper because of the boils of corruption which keep erupting on sensitive parts of the body politic. Now that he clearly feels under siege from that strange coalition of forces reportedly preparing to release more from The Age tapes at regular intervals, his likely program for electoral survival in 1988 is even more difficult to establish.

Another problem in outguessing Nifty is the lack of reliable information dribbling from the bunch of scribes and TV comics working at State Parliament House rejoicing, with a few exceptions, in the collective title of The Iced Vo-Vos. Luckily, however, after eight years in office, the Wran Government has more leaks than the Canberra Defence department has to Brian Toohey, so charting the grubby path of Wran the Man's Tammany Hall machine is as easy as tracking Rex Jackson at Randwick Races.

As 1984 slid into oblivion, even short contemplation made us realise that, despite Nifty's desperate efforts to muzzle the critical sections of the press at the beginning of the year, it had turned out a worse 12 months than even 1983, when he faced the public humiliation of the Street Royal Commission. The credibility slide continues apace.

All the signs are emerging that Nifty and his cabal have pasted together a sort of shoddy master plan to keep Greiner and his Liberals at bay in 1988, almost certainly by using large barrowloads of public money on the Darling Harbour project.

To those who know Sydney, Darling Harbour is the 50-hectares of desolate old railway yards and derelict buildings between Chinatown and Ultimo, an area which Nifty intends for the biggest urban renewal program ever undertaken in Australia.

Wran has described it as "New South Wales' bi-centennial gift to the nation" and expects that \$1 billion will be spent in private and public finance on the rejuvenation.

At the expensive public relations launch in the lobby of State Parliament House on December 14, Wran – with

Public Works Minister Laurie Brereton, Nifty's heir apparent, in tow – said it "would be transformed into a major recreation development and international tourist attraction."

While few disagree with the general concept, a wave of criticism is building up from cynics who believe the real reason for such a mammoth scheme is to help Labor's re-election in the State election of 1988.

The critics, ranging from Sydney City Council alderman and Green Bans champion Jack Mundey, to the biggest private investor and landholder at Darling Harbor, businessman Ian Yates, point to the way Wran wrenched proper participation away from the City Council and public and private interests by passing special legislation giving all power to Laurie Brereton as Minister for Public Works.

Wran was kept like a mad old aunt in the attic.

As Nifty is clearly hoping to leave NSW politics with Brereton poised to step into his shoes, the Darling Harbor scenario allows Brereton to feature endlessly in publicity photos and huge advertisements about the scheme.

His position as Project Supremo also gives him immense power of patronage with the Hungarian Brotherhood developers who are hungry for a slice of the financial bonanza.

Although Nifty and Brereton – who still carries the stigmata of the Botany Council Affair – spend taxpayers' money on advertisements in Rupert Murdoch's newspapers about public participation, in reality there has been little opportunity for this, and the letters' page of the Sydney Morning Herald already reflects the growing public uneasiness about the secrecy and the Labor Establishment network behind it all.

Then there are more and more NSW politicians, including Ministers, who have little doubt that an alternative scenario, if the Darling Harbor plan begins to falter, would be for Wran to retire as Premier in June this year, after doing a deal with the Left to get Brereton the numbers to beat Deputy Premier Ron Mulock or the New Pretender from the Far Right, Transport Minister Barry Unsworth.

If the NSW Parliamentary Caucus allows Legislative Council Labor members to vote in Caucus from next June, Unsworth would have the numbers to override Nifty in Caucus, and, by exten-

sion, in Cabinet. Wran, who detests Unsworth (along with many of the NSW Labor Party rank and file) would not tolerate losing Cabinet control to him. He would almost certainly cite ill health as a reason for accepting a plum job from Hawke.

Another factor in an early Wran departure could be that he is no longer clearly perceived as an electoral asset, rather as a liability, with a mid-1984 Morgan Poll rating of 37 per cent, well below Greiner at 44 per cent. Also, few astute political observers missed how Wran was kept like a mad old aunt in the attic during the 1984 Federal campaign.

Of course, Nifty faces many other complications in preparing a smooth transition of power to Brereton. The Opposition seems likely to bring up the Botany Council Affair again, and Labor members already worried about losing seats and office in 1988 are unlikely to vote into the Premiership a Minister tarred anew by allegations of corruption in his past.

The Nervous Neddies want as a replacement for Wran someone who cannot be electorally undermined by an Opposition campaign on corruption, the issue which has brought Wran to his knees politically, inside and outside the Labor party.

For this reason, there are many NSW Caucus members who say openly that Mulock, dull as he is, or Terry Sheahan, with his father's Irish cunning, would be a better bet for electoral survival than Brereton or Frank Walker, the so-called Left winger who's fading in the wings after Jack Ferguson's departure.

Incidentally, Ferguson has become Deputy Chairman of the Darling Harbor Authority, working with Chairman Alex Carmichael, the former executive of Sir Peter Abeles' TNT.

While Ferguson may well be there only for the healthy stipend and car and driver the job provides, the Opposition is already planning to look at Carmichael's appointment when State Parliament resumes soon.

Within a few months, Nifty may have cause to recall the plagiarised comment of his notorious predecessor, Sir Robin Askin, who said: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

Wran also probably recalls how Askin got out early before the tales of Askin's corruption hit the fan, then lived a few pleasant years in an office in TNT towers before leaving his mysteriously-gained \$3.7 million legacy as a last laugh to the voters.

*In New Zealand, it is a source of great shame
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Their country needs them. New Zealand's top writer/cartoonist
Tom Scott issues a plea for every drug peddler, burglar,
pimp and prostitute to come home.*

by Tom Scott

Many years ago when I was a small boy my sister used to get the occasional copy of an English comic for girls called 'School Friend'. Every issue they featured a brief pen portrait of a different country and I can remember vividly still the despondency I felt when it was New Zealand's turn. New Zealand, they said, was a mountainous country with fast flowing rivers. The populace was out-numbered twenty to one by sheep. For sport the boys played rugby and the girls joined marching teams. Wellington was the capital. Auckland the largest city.

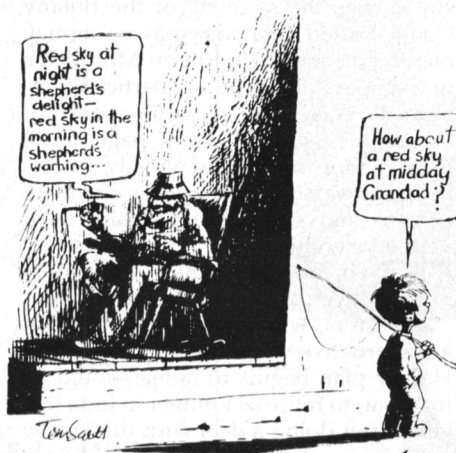
That was it. They had nothing else to say. Maybe there was nothing they could have said. Whatever, I was depressed for weeks. But that was the 1950's when garlic was still a music hall joke and New Zealanders thought oil and vinegar in combination had to be kept well clear of naked flame. Things have improved but not sufficiently to prevent New Zealanders from fleeing overseas in their thousands. Improved telecommunications and international jet travel rather than bringing the outside world closer have only confirmed we are the arse-end of beyond.

Our opera singers, concert pianists, rock musicians, painters, writers, and criminals have had no choice but to go overseas to further their careers. The latter (much to Australia's disgust) usually getting no further than Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. I understand your concern. It is a source of deep shame on this side of the Tasman that our young criminals consider Australia a land of opportunity where they can refine their skills and earn really big money. It is a bit of a vicious circle really. Until we can keep our young drug peddlers, burglars, pimps and prostitutes at home we are never going to build up an indigenous underworld, and until we have an indigenous underworld our best, brightest and most corrupt are going to gravitate naturally to New South Wales.

But a deep and fundamental satisfaction comes from the realisation that we are not likely to be a nuclear target in the event of a nuclear war. The new Labour Government's insistence that nuclear-armed and propelled warships will not be allowed into our ports has delighted most of the electorate even while it has earned David Lange the displeasure of Canberra and Washington. In a world terrified that nuclear war, either by acci-

dent or design is virtually inevitable, New Zealanders have come to see the merit in living in the arse-end of beyond. Lange is a bit of a reluctant debutante on the question of banning nuclear-propelled ships but his party won't yield on the issue and he has had to thunder his objection to their visits as well.

He was tentative at first but when the applause started rolling in from around the globe, if you looked closely you could see his chin firming up where once his jaw might have been. Consequently some American Congressmen have gone berserk. Doubtless the CIA is working overtime on schemes to destabilise the fourth Labour Government but Lange will be hard to discredit. He is happily-married and doesn't drink or smoke. Of all the cardinal sins, he only scores well on gluttony. With cameras in the ceiling the best footage American Intelligence could hope to collect would be film of Lange doing something disgusting to a packet of Mallow-puffs. Liberal leader Andrew Peacock has chastised the New Zealand Labour Government on the grounds that the ANZUS alliance is threatened but other Australians like novelist Patrick White and Midnight Oil lead singer Peter Garrett have heaped praise on our Prime Minister.



Back when I was reading 'School-Friend' radiation sickness was the big fear but now it seems a nuclear holocaust could have even more deadly long term effects. In 1982 the New Zealand Commission For The Future Study Group On Nuclear Disaster reported breezily that a war in the

northern hemisphere would play merry hell with our export receipts as most of major trading partners would cease to exist (being permanently out to launch so to speak). On the import front, noted the Study Group "New Zealanders would have less access to alcohol, tobacco, barbiturates and tranquilisers..."

On the credit side, they predicted a "curtailing of violence on television and cinema screens," and "a greater degree of shared responsibility for child rearing and for the household would change the status of women".

This almost sunny scenario contrasts with the 1984 report of the New Zealand Ecological Society on the effects of nuclear winter in the northern hemisphere. Things would be grim, with New Zealand again being spared the worst. Especially if the Superpowers were considerate enough to hold the holocaust during their own winter. In London, giant glaciers would crunch their way down Oxford Street and Hyde Park would disappear under tundra but in our part of the world washing would take longer to dry on the line and there would no longer be any need for daylight savings.

In either event the worst fallout for New Zealand would be human. Refugees from America, Europe, Japan, the Soviet Union and Australia would head our way in submarines and the few planes left capable of flying. The Americans already have contingency plans to that effect and the Soviets will have followed suit. On the wall in the Kremlin New Zealand has probably been re-named North-Ivan and South Ivan.

To prevent hostilities breaking out needlessly when these heavily-armed refugees arrive we will have to make everyone welcome and defuse tensions. We must treat them as long-stay tourists and move to exploit the situation. I myself favour highly-mobile massage parlours that do extras and that can, at short notice, be dispatched to any beach-head.

To that end we need every drug peddler, burglar, pimp and prostitute we can lay our hands on. Next time you're in the Cross and you come across a heavily eye-shadowed Kiwi, with his or her knickers around their ankles, singing drunkenly, don't abuse them. Tell them their country needs them.

RESEALABLE RITUALS

Living on the land and rejecting life in the fast lane has its joy and horror. Since no one is much interested in joy (it's available at most corner ashrams) I shall elaborate on a horror.

It's the Tupperware Party, still going strong (perhaps a National Party Institution) ensnaring the women on the land who are already locked into animal husbandry (all their husbands are animals) and devouring their ticket to freedom – their money.

Mr Tupper. The name conjures up a fat, Dickensian person; the man who found a way to keep women in the house, extract exorbitant amounts of money from them and delude them into thinking it was all a party. He died last year. I hope they melted him along with three million tonnes of his rotten plastic lids.

I am on the Party List because I am a member of the Parents and Citizens Association of Frumlow Primary School, where my dispossessed children are now experiencing the full horrors of the New South Wales state education system. I am also on the list because I am New Blood and Tupperware parties have a distinct haemophilic approach to their victims.

Tupperware is so *passe*, I laugh, don't you know about Sex Aids parties? I am met with blank fear. Sex? Aids? Aren't they diseases? Hmm. I feel their bucolic numbness stretch its barbed wire fingers towards me. Well, if I can handle Tupperware. I accept and immediately a catalogue and price list are thrust into my hand to enable me to peruse at leisure and preselect my purchases.

It rolls around as Tuesdays do and I'm in Dorrie's lounge room. It is gloomy and airless. The sunlight manages to push its way through the layers of flywire, glass, venetians and nylon netting and hit the curved glass of the framed Holy Mary Mother of Nothing. She's hanging unhappily between Holly Hobbie and Dorrie-As-A-Bride. We are the women with inevitable hangers-on, the baby men and women. A mixed bag. Mothers, grandmothers and single daughters, yet there is the same look of non-expectation in all their eyes. They've been to 700 Tupperware parties. The effect is the same as 700 blind dates – all with the same man. (A blind date, incidentally, is when you go out with someone you don't know and get thoroughly pissed before they arrive.)

by Sue Ingleton



Illustration by Victoria Roberts

It's a tight fit. I'm on the vinyl couch and my thighs are melting like a round of canasta to its viscous surface. Small talk swells and abates. Cows, rain, sun, children, food. There is a jolly solidarity among the older women and a voyeristic innocence among the young.

Gay Ann is harassed. She has four-under-five. Her waistline has gone. She only had it six years, what else is in store for her? The older women know, but won't tell. Their firm gaze offers no help or escape. They didn't, so why should she? I'm new, but don't rate much open curiosity, or am I so different that I don't count?

Our party co-ordinator is called Phyllis. She's come laden with samples; they are piled ritualistically along one wall – the effect is religious. An altar of Tupperware. We are the laity, we look but don't touch. Gay Anne's young man-child doesn't know the rules and gradually destroys the lower level of the Holy Pile. He is smacked and hissed at. This increases his natural angst and incites him to greater profanities. He removes lids (clever kid). Such desecrations will not be tolerated. I am about to suggest that he be given free rein at the Shrine, when she gets him in an armlock, which proves quite effective. He feels secure and abates. Phyllis has the floor. She's organised games. Well it IS a party. We all get little notepads and pencils. Phyllis is hot to trot.

The first game I can't understand. I realise I have to stop thinking to join in. Phyllis, with the agility of a poddy calf, leaps around and places at our feet a blob of plastic in the shape of something use-

ful – the presumption is enormous. We then run around when our number is called and steal someone's blob, leaving our own in its place. Fascinating.

Next is question and answer time.

'Who is the best-dressed lady?'

I'll surely bomb here. I dyed my bleached hair bright cyclamen the day before as a gesture of defiance, so I'm bright pink on top and decidedly under-dressed down below. As it turns out, I score surprisingly well – but for all the wrong reasons.

'Who's got on a lace petticoat?' I have, its just that I'm not wearing any dress on top of it. 'Who's wearing earrings?' I am. Three of 'em. 'Who's wearing something pink?' Oh, wow Phyllis, my hair's pink! That must be worth 50 points!

As Phyllis drones on, I am devising new questions in my mind. Who burned their bra last summer? Who faked an orgasm last night? Who slept on the wet spot? Who HAD a wet spot? Oh boy, Tupperware is ripe for revolution. The games finish with me cheating on an intellectual level which Phyllis can't quite grasp and I win a plastic comb. Wow.

Now comes the Big Sell. Phyllis moves in on the alter chanting her litany. Silence descends on the group. Phyllis is a maniac. She trembles as she caresses, the cool Tupperware, her mouth is dry and she licks her lips often. Obviously this is a very sensitive area. She's having a fulfilling relationship with the product.

She selects one of her favourites and gives us the time-honoured demo of how to rip off the ingenious, resealable lid. Pop! The smell of fresh Tupperware pervades the room. I gag. The world of Tupperware is being revealed to the vestal virgins. My eyes fall out like Three Mile Island when I behold the *piece de resistance* (my *de resistance* is hot today). The Beetroot Server. Excruciating, devilish design. Phyllis' face, she's getting off on this, small beads of sweat are forming on her fine moustache. The Beetroot Server is a cylinder in divine maroon tint with an ingenious (Phyllis' sales hype is repetitive) plunger which removes the beetroot minus the JUICE!

The vestals are on the edge of their seats. Magnificent! No more unsightly stains on the tablecloth. I don't have a tablecloth and I don't EAT the stuff. Do I perceive faded beetroot stains on all their dresses? Is that why they're all ordering one?



Phyllis' mouth is reaching a peak dry – I have the feeling that somewhere else she is quite damp. She moves through the display, ending all of her comments with "I've got one of these and I can truly say it's wonderful". A vision of Phyllis' home builds in my mind. I look through the venetians to check out her car. Ah, yes – a Tupperware Corona. This woman lives and breathes Tupperware.

A change of pace. She's moving into the New Range, something she herself hasn't tested. Uncharted territory, this could be dangerous but, phew, it's OK; they've been in America for months and proved so popular. Oh good, good, we'll buy, buy. We are now allowed into the Inner Sanctum to touch, handle and open lids! Dorrie's furniture will never be the same again. In fact, the laminex sideboard already has a Holy glow. I need to piss. Out through the kitchen – oh lord, look at the spread! Oh hell, I didn't bring a plate. Sin of sins. I sit in the outside toilet and listen to the roosters crowing and the grass growing. Well I've signed myself up for \$30. Well, it's for the school. You see, the gimmick is this: you have a party, sell \$200 worth of Tupperware and receive a free gift, which you can then raffle to raise money for the school!

Dorrie hands me a cuppa on my return and I lunge for a lamington. Gay Ann's Brat has taken a fancy to me. I think it's

the pink hair. He's onto his third caramel custard tart, the other two are spread all over his face and the chair. It looks as though I'm going to cop the third. This man-child is the same age as my daughter. He's into level-four breathing, which means he's going to speak. We stare apprehensively. Out it comes along with the custard "...MAARMDERE..." His sticky paw grabs my skirt as he clutches for the balance he lost in pointing to his mortified mother.

Gay Ann gapes at my caramel custard

I swipe, er, wipe him clean. A Chinese burn to the nostrils stops him dead in his tracks. A neat trick I learned at playgroup a decade ago.

petticoat. Hey, hey, hey (I'm so good about it). Give the kid the benefit of the doubt, he must have a brain in there somewhere. His nose is like the pavement outside the Albion on a Saturday night – awash with slime." Hey, hey let's get you a tissue.

I swipe, er, wipe him clean. A Chinese burn to the nostrils stops him dead in his tracks. A neat trick I learnt at the playgroup a decade ago. I move out of reach and score another lamington.

Amidst coconut and jam, Phyllis nails me in a corner and slyly asks if I'd like to have a party. What does she mean? Oh, I see. Well, um, no. Not right now Phyllis, you see I live in a caravan and well I just can't see the ladies squatting on the trench after afternoon tea. She absorbs this with good humour. I live in a caravan. The understatement of the century. I exist, I endure a caravan. You can't imagine how long it takes to build a house – with a hammer. What I really miss is a door. Just one door I can shut and lock behind me. Even Dorrie's house with its three L's of country living – linoleum, laminex and lamingtons – begins to look attractive.

I'm leaning on Dorrie's dresser, resplendent with the results of twenty years of Tupperware parties. Some are collectors' items, one would fetch a fortune at the Paddington Market. Phyllis is writing out more orders. Each little sale brings another little orgasm. Perhaps I could put you down for a party in '85 when you've got your house built? Ahh Phyllis, I love your optimism but I still have Mr Reagan to worry about. Well perhaps HE could have one? Aaah Phyllis my dear ... I'll let you know.

Though, on my way home, I am contemplating it. On my conditions, of course. Phyllis can set up the altar, but I get to arrange the games. Now there's a way to revolutionise Georges Gorge.

(Continued from page 15.)

Relating this to a young father, he said: "That's good, isn't it?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"That you had those feelings."

I suppose it is. There are some things which don't come in books. People think that New Fathering is at the behest of the child (As an old friend said of me: "He's trapped, trapped in a web of love") but what actually gets you through the night is a certainty of inner enrichment. The last drug of the Me Generation, the trip that lasts forever...

In a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald last year, a couple explained why they sought an abortion: "We felt unequal to the demanding task of properly raising a child. More importantly, we were unwilling to inflict the war obsessed society in which we live on any child of ours."

As it washed down the drain, their unborn foetus must have breathed a sigh of relief.

Surely everyone feels unequal to the task of raising a child – none more so than the fumbling fathers of today, belatedly brooding. If we all stopped because of Bomb Culture, then the holocaust might as well have already begun. It is a new breed; lovingly nurtured, emotionally sound and spiritually evolved, that is our best ally. The more the merrier.



Reliable Memoirs

by Bruce (Bluey) Genes

Following the extraordinary success of expatriate Australian Clive James' "Unreliable Memoirs" and subsequent outpourings, MATILDA is proud to introduce to the English-speaking world a literary fragment by James' buddy and mentor, Bruce (Bluey) Genes. It has been edited by one of their Sydney University contemporaries of the late 1950s, William Pinwill.

All in, the whippy's taken! Things were getting too easy. There was I, a fatherless kid from Kogarah, getting my own way again. I never ceased to marvel that my IQ was only 723.8 on the Hapsburg-Pymble scale. More than genius but less than mastermind, it was somehow cruel to my university rivals that I should be so clever, and yet so modest. But even then I was learning that you often had to be cruel to be clever.

Bulldog Drummond was my chief reading at this stage, and he showed me, like Titus Andronicus was to later, this. By now the coy girls with their golden curls puzzled me. Last year they had attracted me. Perhaps, Prometheus-like, I had bitten off more than I could chew. What was I to do with this fire in my loins? And why did they call me Yobbo, when my name was Bruce?

Already, life was a puzzle. Fortunately, the key was to hand.

As I rode my Malvern Star, my own Bucephalus, down Science Road, I fell off. I pretended not to notice the graze on my aquiline nose, and picked myself out of the radioactive glass that always littered the university's roads. All were unpaved in those far-off Maralinga days. Pain became pleasure. Years of Bogart films at the Rockdale Roxy had taught me all there was to know about pain and pleasure. Bentham was yet to come. De Sade was still a decade away. That's another two books, at this rate.

Stranger than fact, truer than fiction, university life found its nadir in schooners of New at the Forest Lodge.

I also learned that when you fart, other people notice you. The great poets knew this. I affected a liking for Ezra Pound, knowing all the time he wasn't the full quid. Francisco Garcia Lorca became my first posthumous passion, though I was yet to actually finish reading one of his poems. Scanning the original Spanish while strap-hanging in a peak hour Bondi tram was something my friendly

rival Spencer could do. I could not do it. How I envied him. Later I discovered Spencer had no Spanish, only Portuguese. God, he was clever.

The pleasures of masturbation now bored me. The answer lay in writing, or so it seemed as I flashed my pen before the bedazzled eyes of Gooleen Crump in the back row of Anthropology I. The thought of writing for money had never occurred to me, even when I was so poor I ate tarantula-tails on toast for a five pound dare at Manning House. Mother wept when I told her; I pretended they were just harmless huntsmen. My self-taught knowledge of entomology had equipped me to deceive anyone on the subject. Deception began to replace perception in my precocious sub-Skinnerian cosmos.

*You can't cheat at
two-up all your life. But it
helps to know how.*

The day I cut my finger on a Swiss Army penknife at South Steyne was unforgettable. The blood, so red, ran Lethe-like down my Sweaty Joe, turning its blue to a truly amazing purple. Frank Sinatra had taught me courage in "From Here to Eternity". The crowds gathered. There were clouds in the sky. Then the sun broke through, and the blood miraculously dried, in a way that only the Australian sun can dry. Even now, I miss the way that blood dries so quickly in the South Steyne sun.

Like Captain Oates in 'South With Scott', I realised it was time to go. The wide open spaces of Wandsworth Common called. Goethe once wrote, "In every parting there is a germ of madness". He may have been right, at least in part. But the boomerang always comes back. My 112-year old kindergarten teacher with the hare lip had shown me how to catch a boomerang in your mouth. It was something I was never to forget. My boomerang exploits won me praise from the Push, and a special place in the Royal George pantheon of heroic failures.

Australia in the 1950s was a cultural wasteland and a political desert. My natural temptation was to man the barricades and fight the good fight for justice, quality of life, an artistic renaissance. But the advice of Philo of Byzantium, gleaned from a Classic Comic in an Ingleburn latrine during a National Service camp, opened another door.

"It is your duty," said Philo to his commanding general, "not to take part in the battle, for whatever you may accomplish by spilling your own blood could not compare with the harm you would do to your own interests if anything happened to you."

Similar wisdom flowed from the lips of Leo Cowpat, the poofter adman from Stanmore, who understood better than most the stigma of a petty bourgeois suburban upbringing. Abandon your heritage now, and capitalise on it later – that was the lesson I learned. No matter that the courage to renounce the past is born of fear of the present. Pain and pleasure, fear and courage. As I discovered the duality of life's essential qualities, I realised that duplicity is not just a double-headed penny. You can't cheat at two-up all your life. But it helps to know how.

Two-up is the most popular sport in Australia, and crowds would fill the Sydney Cricket Ground to watch the gladiators match their skills. "Come in spinners," they roared as one. The Crusaders of the Chanson d'Anthioche were no less brave than these contestants. I felt humbled by this sudden confrontation and conquest of the innermost fears that afflict us all. Especially at moments of crisis, when fear of failure seized me like the pythons in the jungles of Jannali.

So it was with my first fleeting erections. Hercules had conquered the Stymphalian Birds, but the Catholic virgins of Sancta Sophia College somehow stayed over the rainbow. If I was not to be the Wizard of Oz, I saw that I must become the clown of Cambridge. The Bard of Avon knew what he was doing with the Prince of Denmark. Send me unto England, for there it will not be noticed.

All phoneys are essentially chameleons, I came to realise as I read my imitative and derivative verse in Honi Soit, Hermes, Arna and any beer coaster that happened to fall beneath my prolific pen in May's Family Hotel. My poems were short then. Payment by the line was still unknown to me. The land of phoneys beckoned. I heard the call, like Tarzan in 'Valley of Echoes', or Paul on the road to Damascus. As Pharaoh Tuthmosis III had outflanked the King of Kadesh at Megiddo in 1469 BC, so could I do the Poms at their own game.

To out-phoney the original phoneys on their home ground would make me leader of the most important gang in the literary world. This was a challenge. I would meet it.

SUICIDE IN THE CITIES

— by Stephen Brouwer —

CURIOUS EFFECT

Prime Minister Robert James Lee Hawke has had a curious effect on Australian life. Through his unique style of politics, he has fixed his country's inflation rate lower than that of unemployment.

The largely capitalistic population has responded by keeping its suicide rate somewhere in between.

— *Nebelspalter Magazine*,
SWITZERLAND

Who amongst our gentle readers, I ask, would sneer at the nation which gave the world the awesome carnage of the Eureka Stockade and Gallipoli?

We're a proud fearless race when it comes to laying down our lives, so let's give the snivelling Swiss and the Silver Budgie something to think about. The only thing that we've been lacking is a little latter-day direction. To this end I have prepared The Guide.

Please study The Guide carefully for any improvisation could result in a mere maiming, which can be both painful and boring. And please obtain a certificate stating that you are dead; for instance, there is little distinction between being dead and being in Canberra after midnight.

Sydney

Sydney is known as the city where the clumsiest suicide attempts are made. These range from insulting prostitutes to riding on suburban trains at night. Both are crude methods and are rarely successful. The Gap and the Harbour Bridge are traditional venues, but zealous policemen and high fences have all but ruined serious attempts. More innovation is needed.

Recommended:

- Poke two strands of wire into a power point. However, first check with the relevant authority regarding black-outs. More than one attempt has failed during power restrictions.
- Tie yourself to a railway line. Once again, please check with the relevant authority. A recent attempt at this otherwise quick death ended in starvation

due to a signalman's strike. Slow and agonising.

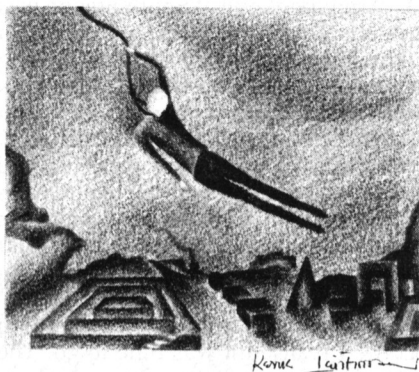
- Lacking the immediacy of an express train, but cheap and effective, is to roam the Kings Cross establishments, telling the managers: "I'm collecting for Abe. Pay up." Release from life's woes may take up to two hours while your fraud is being exposed, but it's assured.

Melbourne

When the residents of the Money Capital choose to fall on their swords, they're usually broke. The hand-made Italian shotguns, so suitable for the last big bang, have long ago been pawned, so low budget methods are essential.

Recommended:

- The cheapest way to meet one's maker is to watch an entire Moomba parade. This is sometimes difficult to achieve because of the sheer numbers seeking the same fate. However, if you secure a vantage point, total brain failure can



eventuate within 56 minutes.

- The above method can also be employed in the privacy of one's own home by watching the same event on television. Although comfort is assured, commercial breaks can dissipate a good cerebral haemorrhage.
- A time-honoured method is to eat at Maxim's restaurant and to order, amongst other things, pheasant under glass, plenty of Rothschild red and refuse to pay. When the French maitre-de becomes argumentative, vomit over him and say: "Your tucker 'ud kill a brown dog and rust the chain."
- Jogging through the city is a more modern approach, but unless you outlay a considerable amount on the correct attire, motorists will find you difficult to identify and a more painful demise through over-exertion may occur before

you can be squashed by a sporting brewery truck.

- Go to a Carlton pub the night before Grand Final and bet heavily on Footscray. It is irrelevant if neither team is a contestant. For you, the end result will be the same.

Adelaide

Death in the city of churches is generally a fairly dull event, but if you want a decent Christian burial then it's just the shot.

Recommended:

- Attend a number of Sunday church services. A pleasant numbness creeps through the body, resulting in the loss of all faculties. Unexciting but effective.
- The sole spectacular method is to brush aside the doorman at the Senior Services Club. Take a prominent stance in the dining room, pin on your 'Conscript Ex-Servicemen' badge and play reveille backwards on a mouth organ. A heart-thrust with silver service is as good a death as any.
- Rolling Jaffas down the aisle during the opera section of the Festival of Arts is gathering momentum. Though it has a certain grandeur, this can only be done on one or two nights during a year and who can predict when one needs to do away with oneself?

Perth

In general, Western Australians are behind the times in seeking the sepulchre. Mundane methods such as declaring: "I'm from Sydney" or swimming in the Swan River are the most popular, but it is possible to be original.

Recommended:

- This will take some groundwork, but it's a great way to go: The Perth Chamber of Commerce holds monthly meetings. Telephone the Secretary well in advance and state that you're Lang Hancock's new executive assistant and you're prepared to address the next meeting. Begin your speech: "Gentlemen, capitalism is dead."
- A slower but more sociable way of bowing out is the Perth backyard barbecue. It may take six weekends, but provided some fool doesn't rush you off for a stomach pump, consider yourself as dead as a maggot.

Brisbane

If you're black and live in Brisbane, then

this guide is of little relevance. Stay there long enough and some one will do the honours for you. However, the white population need not despair. Methods do exist.

Recommended:

- State elections provide some grand opportunities to snuff it. A black power salute when God Save The Queen is played at a Bjelke-Petersen rally should do the trick.
- Failing the above method, try standing outside Brisbane Central Police Station smoking a joint and crying: "God is dead, long live drugs." This is almost guaranteed to cause at least four 140 kilo policeman to accidentally fall upon you.
- Very effective is undertaking a Brisbane By Night tour. Total brain failure should occur within three hours. A suitable alternative is the Cultural Highlights of Brisbane excursion.

Darwin

The Gateway of the North is indisputably the Queen City of Suicide. They've been doing it in style for years.

Recommended:

- The traditional method was to eat at a restaurant, but with the growing bourgeois influence, this is becoming difficult. There are however, several eating houses which still offer a suicide service. Seek local advice.

• Like Brisbane, if you're an Aborigine, you're streets ahead. If permitted, go to a gambling establishment, bet heavily and win.

• If non-Aboriginal, bet heavily, win and buy drinks all night for blacks. When you've spent all your winnings, ask the casino manager for a loan.

• Drink a certain, locally-available beer, quaintly known as Cow's Piss. Stomach seizures come immediately. Death is painful, but fairly certain. Failing this, don't drink at all. Death will pursue you.

Hobart

There are only two sure ways to do yourself in if you live on the Apple Isle. The good inhabitants have never been very adept when it comes to taking their lives into, or out of, their own hands. This ineptitude had its beginnings when the European convict ancestors attempted the ultimate statement, but for some inexplicable reason, hung themselves by the wrists instead of the necks. The successful methods are simply listed. Please read several times.

Recommended:

- Go to a crowded bar, announce that you like trees and ask if you can count everybody's thumbs.
- The most traditional Tasmanian method, however, is to attack yourself with a beer bottle. Get drunk and argumentative. Say things that will

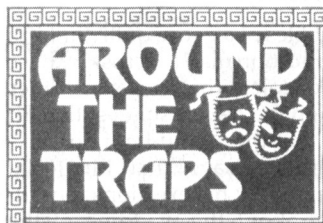
make you very angry. Break the bottle against the wall and do yourself in.

Canberra

In the National Capital, death, like life, is tinged with grey. Face it, politicians and bureaucrats are not noted for flamboyant gestures. But Prime Ministers seem to govern by gimmick, why don't they go by gimmick? A televised, Reverend Jim Jones-style mass suicide in King's Hall is what this country needs. Picture the Folk Hero at the foot of King George's statue, exhorting his parliamentary colleagues to go to the big chamber in the sky. Paul Keating and John Button could distribute slices of yellow cake.

Recommended:

- If you're a mere citizen, try climbing the brick fence surrounding the American embassy. You will soon hear a voice ordering you to stop. Run toward the voice.
- Getting married and buying a house in the outer suburbs is a popular way of ending it all in Canberra. This, however, is a long term approach to life's problems and requires a certain dedication. Most blow it by getting divorced and moving elsewhere.
- A suitable alternative to this costly and time-consuming approach is to live in Canberra, not get married and not buy a house in the suburbs. It's a cleaner way of dying.



SYDNEY

At the time of press, The Comedy Store was considering moving its male strip show (euphemistically known as 'Ladies Night') upstairs into the Jamison Street Nightclub to make room for more comedy/revue on Wednesday and Thursday nights. The Store, on Friday and Saturday nights, is still the home of the stand-up comic in Sydney, where the likes of Rodney Rude and George Smilovic have been elevated from total obscurity to the Bert Newton Show. Tuesday night is Amateur Night.

If four-letter words no longer amuse, you should be delighted to learn that The Gap, Sydney Trade Union Club, Surry Hills, is considering an encore performance in May of *Characters II: Women Comics From Across Australia*. Rumour has it, too, The Gap would like to take on The Comedy Store in a 'Battle of the Sexes' type comedy show. Whatever would they award as prizes?

An interesting alliance of ex-Nimrod actors, producers, directors, stagehands and bar staff are about to

breathe life into the old Nimrod Theatre on Belvoir Street, Surry Hills. The Belvoir Street Theatre Co, incorporating the likes of Noni Hazlehurst, Robyn Archer and Lewis Fitzgerald, promises to become more than just another Sydney theatre venue. The Late Show, scenes of some hilarious satirical revues in the past, will be resurrected. Watch out for a new show the company has commissioned from 2JJJ's Jay-team. Theatre opens March 7.

Over in the bowels of the ABC, Darlinghurst, 2JJJ is still gloating over the relative success of its 10th birthday celebrations. Breakfast DJ and J-team leader Rusty Nails reports however there is no truth in the rumour the team has been offered "several figures" to join radio station 2UE. They have in fact been offered four million dollars to stay away from Mark Collier. Still committed to in-depth stupidity on the airwaves, Roger De Suave, Lillian Pascoe and Wayne Simpson can be heard from 6-10 am every morning.

Please bow your heads for the unfortunate demise of *Australia: You're Standing In It*, as Rod Quantock and company have decided there will be no more episodes this season. At least cult hero Max Gillies is back this month. Gary McDonald also returns to ABC-TV in a "black comic role" about old age and how one family copes with it. This may not be funny at all. Called *Mother and Son*, it begins Monday nights from March 4. Also stars Ruth Cracknell.

Sheryle Bagwell

MELBOURNE

On A Clear Day You Can See Jane Clifton, is on at the Last Laugh, Collingwood. The Girl from 'Prisoner' takes a humorous walk through her teenage years, boyfriends and all. Until March 9.

There's not a lot happening in Australia's comedy capital, Melbourne, at the moment. Many of the entertainers - Los Trios - are entertaining Sydneysiders. The people from the Gillies Report have been on holiday. Things will start to happen soon I think. I hope.

Wanda Roxoff

BRISBANE

Melbourne has The Last Laugh, Sydney has The Comedy Store and now Brisbane has Giggle O's. The brainchild of 23-year-old public servant Greg Cooley, Giggle O's started in June last year in a draughty hall in Brisbane's trendy West End and has provided Queensland with something else to laugh at besides its politicians. It has links with The Comedy Store and regulars from there, including George Smilovich and Vince Sorrenti, have already performed at Giggle O's but Cooley is committed to encouraging local talent. Cooley, who describes himself as an entrepreneur, says Giggle O's is mainly new wave comedy with the occasional magician's act thrown in, such as Brisbane magician Phil Cass, who always goes over well. Giggle O's needs 300 people at each show to break even so do yourself a

favour and go and have a sticky. It's on at the Colossus Hall, the second Tuesday of each month.

Cartoons by the late Gerard Hoffnung, known for his musical satire concerts in London's Albert Hall, will be displayed in the foyer of the Brisbane City Hall until February 7. The cartoons are witty and inventive and depict such things as vacuum cleaners in their irreverent send-up of opera and classical music.

The Brisbane Cinema Group has some brilliant movies scheduled in its 1985 movie calendar, including Eric Rohmer's delicate comedy of manners, *Le Beau Mariage* (March 6, 8.15 pm, Centre Cinema, Brisbane Community Arts Centre). Brisbane's oldest film society, most of its better films are unfortunately to be screened for members only, although it plans a number of public screenings (such as the Rohmer film) throughout the year.

Gambling in Queensland, Fending off Forgetfulness and Reproductive Technology are some of the courses offered this year by the Continuing Education Program at the University of Queensland. There are no formal entry requirements and the fees are quite reasonable. The unit is located on the 7th level of the Michie Building at the University of Queensland. The telephone number is 377 4040.

Sue Johnson.

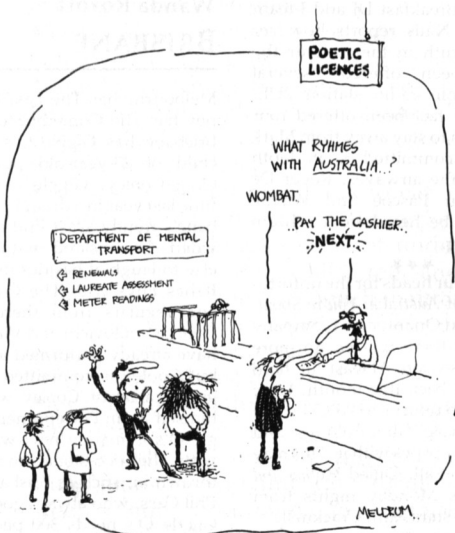




It is an odd thing that the British press has been particularly hard on Hughes' first work as Laureate, since one would expect that journalists, of all people, would be in a position to sympathise with someone whose job it is to write to order irrespective of whether the muse is upon him.

Again, just as every journalist has had to write a "colour" piece about household pets, about budgies said by their owners to be capable of Max Gillies impersonations and about Weimaraners stuck up telegraph poles Mr Hughes will be called, ere long, to write an epic poem marking the birth or death or the remarriage or some other significant event among the Queen's family of rebarbative corgis. Her Majesty dotes on her corgis and cannot see that they look just like gross guinea pigs. All journalists should have some sympathy with a man destined to have to write about them, although Hughes, having failed to create

Our sisters need to be told, and Sir John tells it like it is, that it is no fun to be



racked by a 30,000 volt spasm of lust every time we catch a glimpse of some absolutely unobtainable golden girl pedalling down a cycle path or mincing about the office. Forgive us our leers and our trespasses.

Sir John was a vulnerable man who may easily have been driven over the brink by the loonies of the Royal Family but Hughes appears to be a tougher cookie altogether, a man who spends a great deal of time trudging out of doors in the country in howling gales watching things bleed to death or die of rabies.

One imagines that he will be particularly good at recording the deaths and the decompositions of any horses that Princess Anne and Captain Phillips might break in the pursuit of their erratic equestrian hobbies and that he will, drooling, haunt royal Ascot with his notebook in the hope that one of the Queen's thoroughbreds will break a leg and have to be shot.

To return to the antipodes... Mr Hawke needs a Poet Laureate not only because, a vain man, he has an image of himself as a regal figure elevated above the grime of politics but also because the choice of someone to sing his official praises would bereave Mr Hawke of the need to do this for himself.

At the moment, in the Parliament, Mr Hawke spends more time talking about

himself and the respect accorded to him by all living things other than the Opposition than he does on affairs of state. I would fain lift this burden from him so that, instead of being distracted by the minutiae of his own magnificence, he could apply his fabulous brain to the governance of our nation.

British poets laureate are not paid a living wage but continue to receive the nominal rewards that they were first given in the Dark Ages. My memory is not clear on this but I think that they are given a few guineas, a hogshead of prune vinegar, the exclusive right to have sexual relations with the swans on the Thames etc etc.

For my part I will forego any invitation to harass the fauna of Lake Burley Griffin and will make do with simple loot, in return for which I will write reverent verses like those that follow. Mr Hawke's laureate would burst into verse to record such special events as Mr Hawke's timely appearance, in January, in the Aussie dressing rooms as success loomed at last in the fifth and final Test against the sable West Indians. This is what I would have written to mark that occasion.

*Let Pentaxes click and Nikkons whirr
And hold all the front pages!!
For Robert Hawke is risen today,*

*After absolutely ages!
For four humiliating Tests,
On us the Windies pissing,
The man who basks in gold success
Was mysteriously missing.*

*While Marshall's awesome thunderbolts
Were nicking the Aussie blades,
Our PM shunned their dressing room
As though they all had AIDS.*

*When the lissom darkies' victories
Had toppled the tearful Kim
Our Lachrymose Prime Minister
Chose not to pose with HIM.*

*During Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane,
Those matches cruel and gory,
Our Prime Minister laid in wait
For the promise of some glory.*

*And in Sydney as young Wessels
At last procured a ton
Bob emerged from his hibernation
As though awoken by the sun.*

*And as the joyous Kepler basked
Before the adoring press
Bob sidled up to his shoulder
To share in this success.*

*So Robert Hawke is risen today
The world shouts "Hallelujah!"
And only malcontents whinge that
His timing is peculiar.*



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Let's make it Australian!"**

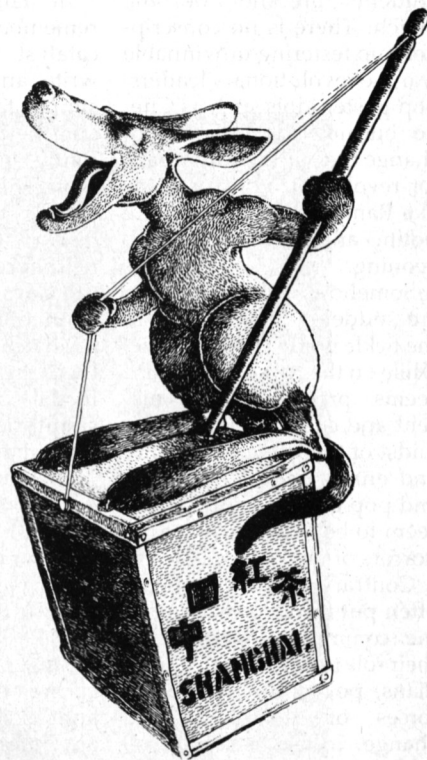
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POP GOES WAR

by Bruce Elder



Students are not on the march. There is no conscription, no festering unwinnable war, no revolutionary leaders/pop poster idols such as Che, no burning idealists out to change the world, no manuals for revolution, no magazines like Ramparts, and no yuppie rioting and night stick bludgeoning.

Somehow, anti-war songs are suddenly big business in the fickle world of rock music, while on the surface the world seems profoundly complacent and conservative. In the midst of this apparent apathy and ennui, the premier rock and pop groups of the day all seem to be railing against the horrors of war.

Contrary to the arguments often put forward by those in the community who feel it their role to be our moral guardians, pop and rock are not forces of radicalism and change. In fact rock and roll with its overt sexism, its frequent dalliances with the regalia of the Nazis, its potential to turn every struggling working class kid into an indolent, property-owning,

millionaire is, if anything, ultra conservative.

It was the traditionally radical American folk scene which supplied the soundtrack to sixties radicalism – not rock.

Rock isn't radical, but youth is. And it's in the radicalism of youth that the answer to this current spate of war songs can be found.

The world may be an even more conservative place to live in but with the conservatism, arguably as a handmaiden to it, comes what can only be described as the politics of despair... and the politics of despair are essentially anarchic.

They owe no allegiance to any movement, they lack even the vaguest hint of idealism, they are not motivated by a desire to change the world. Hence what is left is either an impassioned cry of pain or a desperate, hollow and nihilistic laugh at the pointlessness of everything.

In fairness, it is worth remembering that a potent catalyst to these desires to write anti-war songs is the simple fact that both Britain and the United States are currently in the grips of war-mongering, jingoistic, xenophobic administrations and leaders the likes of which neither country has seen since the days of Eisenhower and Churchill.

Thatcher and Reagan, with their frighteningly cosmetic media images and their simplistic appeals to patriotism and Mom's apply pie in the sky can only leave those unhappy with their foreign policies, festering with a sense of impotence.

Boy George sings:

"War is stupid and people are stupid..."

The song is simple sloganeering, eminently danceable and as irritatingly catchy as any nursery rhyme. It is also shot through with a real sense of helplessness. If you can't beat them, dance to their absurdities. Yet such simple sloganeering is powerfully subversive.

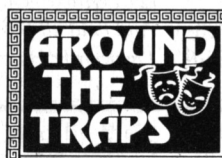
If you accept that soft drinks and toys and games can be sold to pubescent teenagers by clever jingles and slogans; you stop and think of all the hundreds of thousands of kids who will leap about and shout out that chorus in discos, then you've got to accept that George and his Culture Club cohorts may well be making a more potent and subversive contribution to the anti-war movement than a thousand impassioned Peter Garrett speeches.

In fact in the anti-war league Midnight Oil (although their music belongs to the 1980's) are lyrically more attuned to the protest movements of the 1960's. There's

an articulate rage, a kind of luminescent idealism, which, in spite of Garrett's lack of hair, is far more in keeping with the ethos of hirsute hippie optimism than of nihilistic punk and skinhead pain.

The result is extremely bizarre. Anti-war songs are ridiculously fashionable and yet politics, radicalism, and idealism are seen as totally irreverent.

Such a strange set of circumstances should have many an old-style political trendie writhing in sleepless uncertainty as they try to reconcile what, in their taxonomy, is the irreconcilable.



ADELAIDE

Theatre: *Cheapside*, Dave Allen's amusing glance at the crumbling world of the late Tudors (The Stage Company), Space, Festival Centre, March 7-23.

Though not the most lighthearted work from the Tudor Bard himself, *Richard III* is a remarkable exercise in unassailable Shakespearean wit on the topics of blood, roses and young boys in towers. (State Theatre Co.) Playhouse, Festival Theatre, March 1-23.

Rendle Rita, is a comic adaptation of Claire Luckham's Trafford Tanzi. Why do school readers preach that Mum can teach Jane the art of dishwashing? Why not to dig for gold? Discover the Nile? A struggle for gender identity set inside a wrestling ring. (Troupe), Unley Town Hall. March 7-31.

★ ★ ★

Radio: Ha Ha Hee Hee Haw Haw Nyuck Nyuck, 5UV, Sat. 1.30-2.00 pm. The 30 Minute Comedy Hour, 5MMM FM, Sat. 2.00-2.30 p.m. Fractured Fairytales, The Women's Journal, 5UV, Sun 3-4.00 pm, rep Mon 9-10 am.

★ ★ ★

Cabaret: *Flying Trapeze/Comedy Cafe*, Victoria Square. All night comedy acts, mainly the stand-up variety incl. Dave Flanagan, Wayne Anthony, Benny Twigg. As standard see-saws, check first (Ph: 51 5143) Thurs-Sun.

Limbo, Fenn Place, City. Featuring Pluto In Paris, el supremos of comedy/rock/cabaret. Wed-Sat, 6pm-3am. (Ph: 211 7117).

Tim Potter's incisive comments on daily events are worth the effort of fingering the dial. 5AN – Drivetime, Mon-Fri.

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– Karen Hughes

CANBERRA

After the screaming success of *Black and Blue – the Bessie Smith Story* in 1984, Maire Haire and Grant Ovendon return to Canberra's Cafe Boom Boom. Their show, *Caio Baby* is direct from Pastels in Sydney and is a time-warp tribute to the female singers of the 1960's. It features the songs of Cilla Black, Dinah Lee, Dusty Springfield, Dione Warwick and Cher. March 7 to 16.

Also at Cafe Jax will be Canberra's Gigantic Fly and the Doug Anthony Allstars, who'll join forces to present a macabre and satirical cabaret. The story involves a cabaret set in Dresden which is bombed and follows the fate of the characters after they die. It's called *Club of Dresden* and you can catch it on March 21, 22, 23 and 28, 29, 30. Cafe Jax also features assorted musical and stand-up comedy acts throughout the month.

Marsha Moulis.

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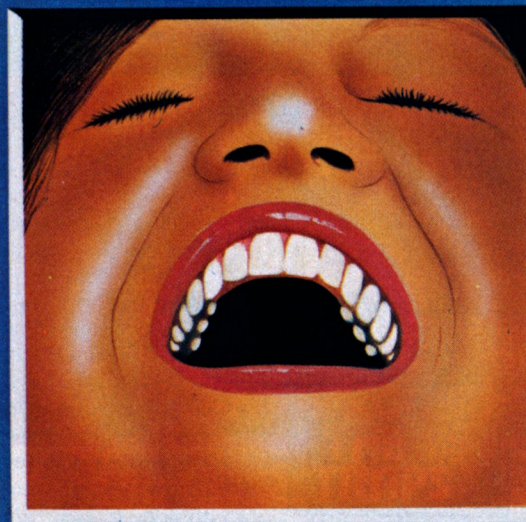
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THE UNHAPPENED JOKE

by James McQueen

Kavanagh: fat man, buffoon, incompetent, liar, adulterer, cuckold, cuckold, cuckold... his comic potential seems enormous. Yet he remains for an almost interminable time an enigma, a man of mystery who puzzles, frightens and defeats us all. He is Gresham's Law personified, the worst of bad managers driving out good... he has solved Camus' riddle, has equated himself firmly and finally with absurdity, and lives in apparent harmony with his own mad world.

The essence of a joke, the kernel, is stasis. Never the pie in flight but the face emerging, frozen and incredulous, from the receding tides of custard; never the banana-skin itself, the skidding heel, the flailing limbs, but the bump, the thud, the moment when all motion ceases and the ultimate rictus is nailed to the features. We watch the pratfall, see the legs whipped away; wait for the spasm of agonised surprise, the bruised buttocks, the cracked coccyx...

But sometimes we are disappointed. Instead of the exquisite humour of pain and indignity we are confronted by some incomprehensible gymnastics, a rolling breakfall, a rapid backward somersault. And the joke, at the very moment of parturition, is aborted; motion continues, laughter is soured.

Kavanagh's progress through the company is one long and unresolved joke. The man is a clown, yet he refuses to play his part. Because he stays for ever in motion, never pauses, never stops; moves without interruption from one disaster to another, the somersault turned to a soft-shoe shuffle, the custard torn to phantom foam by the wind of his passage. And we cannot laugh, the joke cannot finish, until he stops moving, comes finally to rest.

He comes to us barely announced, trailing an aura of tropical heat, of salt pans and windmills and vast red distances. It is late winter, and snow still clings to the ledges of the mountain

above our small town. But Kavanagh blusters into our chills and sleets in a short-sleeved shirt, his belly bulging over his shorts, his pudgy brown face and round spaniel eyes cheerful and ingratiating. The last Maintenance Manager has fled suddenly to the city, unhinged by our isolation and the servilities of our serfdom to the towers of Circular Quay. Kavanagh, tanned and bare-thighed, has come to take his place. We watch him covertly, grinning slyly at each other, waiting for the goosepimples to attack, for the quick retreat to the heaters of his tiny office.

But instead we are forced to watch Kavanagh cheerfully ankle-deep in the slush of the yard, the polar winds stirring his sparse black hair; to watch as he wanders, unfeeling, through the cold mill, the workshops, the frigid tunnels of the store. And never a shiver, never a goosepimple.

We hear that his office windows have been opened, the heaters turned off. And never, never, do we see him wear a sweater, a jacket. True, he begins to wear slacks, but we suspect that it is more a compromise with local custom than a surrender to the temperature.

A certain mystery surrounds Kavanagh's appointment. There have been no advertisements in the national papers, no visits, no interviews. He appears suddenly, preceded only by a brief telex. Even The Boss seems to know very little; he is certainly uncommunicative, even a little disgruntled. We fancy that the appointment has been made without his consultation.

We meet Kavanagh regularly, all the Department Heads. Each day we lunch together in the conference room, proceeding from sandwiches and coffee to cigarettes and business. Our small decisions are made, most of them, then. Kavanagh, at our meetings, seems talkative enough, but strangely uncommunicative. But we learn certain mini-

mal facts. His wife and daughter will arrive soon to join him; his son, studying at the university, will not; the daughter will work as a typist in the general office. And we find out, by observation, that Kavanagh doesn't mind getting his hands dirty on the job. Indeed, there have been mild complaints already from the union representatives.

But, for all his eager energy, there is something about Kavanagh that leaves us a little uneasy. We are mildly repelled by the blubbery frame, the overfrank gaze, the loud and wheedling voice; Kavanagh tries too hard, laughs too loudly at the wrong jokes, ignores too blatantly his own faux pas, rides a little too easily over his own embarrassments. We all feel a kind of expectancy, almost an apprehension, sense that at any moment he may do something so outrageous that the fool inside will stand revealed to the world.

And we wonder about his family. What will they be, the women? Stringy, bucktoothed, sunbleached hags? Obese nonentities? What kind of creatures, we ask ourselves, would find themselves allied, matrimonially or genetically, with Kavanagh?

Their arrival immediately silences our sniggerings, for they are both beauties, nothing less. The daughter, Kathy, who finds her way to a typewriter in my department, is tall, slim, blonde, intimidating exquisite. She is too good to be true, I know immediately that she will not last. So I console myself with furtive and cunning glances down her front, up her dress... ah, those smooth olive thighs...

At forty, her mother Veronica, is hardly less attractive. She is mature, self-possessed, with beauty firmly set in her bones.

These twin miracles, adjunct and product of Kavanagh's overhung loins, dazzle us completely.

And deepen our suspicion of Kavanagh.



Soon there is more fuel to fire our smouldering conjectures. For Kavanagh embarks on a series of dreadful mistakes. All our alarm circuits are to be extended by half a mile. Kavanagh supervises. A trench is dug, eight hundred yards of pipe is laid, covered, wires drawn through. Then panic. There are insufficient conductors for the circuits, the pipe is too small. The trench is reopened, the pipe disinterred and replaced by a larger one, the trench covered once more. Still too few wires. Finally, a raised pipeway is run the full half mile above ground to carry the extra circuits, an absurd viaduct, a visible monument to Kavanagh's inefficiency.

Through it all, strangely, Kavanagh seems no more than mildly concerned. He shakes his head, shrugs his shoulders, dismisses the disaster. We wait, gloating a little, for the monthly cost meeting, wait for The Boss's inevitable blast. But the meeting comes, and... nothing. The Boss grumbles a little, mutters at Kavanagh's lame excuses, lets it go.

Our wonder and suspicion deepen; is Kavanagh protected by the Board? Has he some dirt on the Chairman, a genuine Sir? If not, what restrains the hatchmen of Head Office?

We can find no answers. And the line between farce and the first hints of... fear?... seem suddenly unclear. After all, Hitler seemed once a clown...

We notice in Kavanagh a frightening disregard for rules, written and unwritten. There is the matter of his car. We all have them, plain sand-coloured Holdens. They are self-consciously uniform; no frills, no accessories; identical, interchangeable, and reserved strictly for business. But soon, mysteriously, Kavanagh's car sprouts radio aerial, wind deflectors, radial tyres, air-conditioning. More, he drives it to the golf course, the supermarket, the pub. And only The Boss, in his Mercedes may do that.

Again, nothing happens.

And we are confronted each day by the liquid eyes, the spurious honesty of Kavanagh's moon face. He seems so anxious to please us, to be liked. Only mention the need for a towbar, a kids' swing, an incinerator... and it is done. No nonsense about foreign jobs, no subterfuge, no cover-up; it is all done in the workshops, openly, delivered by maintenance truck direct to backyard. Only the expense is concealed in the workshop costs. He begs, pleads almost, for the chance to do us these small favours...

When he is confronted, as he occasionally is, with exposed transgressions, Kavanagh lies - lies shamelessly, openly, outrageously. When his lie is sheeted home, he lies again; that lie

He seems committed to falsity as firmly as others might be committed to bridge or necrophilia.

exposed, another spills out, as ingenious and unconvincing as the first. His lies are convoluted, circumstantial, sincere. In his way he is most admirable. He has no special targets; he lies to everyone, about everyone, indiscriminately. He seems committed to falsity as firmly as others might be committed to bridge or necrophilia.

Kathy, bored, soon tires of the dullness of our office and leaves for the city. It is hardly unexpected, but I am saddened by the departure of those delicious legs. Veronica, however, seems content enough. She shops, plays golf, joins the craft association, gives parties. An admirable wife. Ah, if any of us had a wife of such excellence we might even aspire, ultimately, to The Boss's job. Not Kavanagh, though, that is unthinkable. For the truth is out. One of the itinerant tradesmen has recognised him, and the news has spread quickly; Kavanagh is no engineer at all, merely a fitter and turner. There are shaking heads, knowing looks. We are certain that this massive self-promotion, this enormity of stepping without formality into the ranks of the professionals, will be challenged. The Boss will act now...

The Boss, of course, always knows things before we do; sometimes, it seems, before they even happen. But time passes, and he does nothing. The headshakings are worried now. What is it? Is Kavanagh the Chairman's bastard? A cousin of the Major Shareholder's Mistress? Nothing seems too outlandish.

We remain convinced, though, that it cannot last. One day he will be forced to halt, he will stop, be stunned somehow into stillness. Then the penny will drop; he will be disgraced, humiliated, shat upon. And we will be able to laugh...

So we wait, wait...

It is the immaculate Veronica, amazingly, who provides us with sudden hope. We come to work one cold spring morning to learn that she has eloped with a hairy brute of a millhand ten years her junior. The two of them are suddenly gone, disappeared, run off... We hear that they have gone to Burra, Mount Morgan, Mount Newman, Gladstone... somewhere. The rumours are positive, though vague; they are disposed of, extracted with complete finality from Kavanagh's life.

We offer our silent and hypocritical sympathy to Kavanagh. For now, in the face of this disgrace, this horned embarrassment, his balloon must burst, he must collapse, at last, into the inevitable

figure of fun. He must...

We feel entitled, after all, to expect a certain standard of behaviour from a cuckold. There is room for variation, of course; he may bluster, rage, threaten, may grit his teeth, bear his shame in silence; may even smile a little, sadly, wanly. There is a certain minimal honour to be salvaged from the circumstances. And we expect that Kavanagh will comply with the proprieties. And we are ready with our subtle scorn.

But again, Kavanagh confuses us. His transparent dishonesty, his doggy affability, is turned overnight into embarrassing confidentiality; he corners us, jointly and severally, and pours out his troubles; gives vividly shameless details of the adulteries, the domestic perfidies. He dredges for our sympathy disgustingly, and we begin to avoid him.

Shunned by his peers, he takes to manoeuvring the office girls into corners, retailing again and again the sordid trivia, his own plight, the sad injustice of it all; and we suspect that he may be seeking not only sympathy but sex. And we are by no means sure that our girls are proof against his portly importunities.

Even so, we are prepared, in decency, to forget the whole business, to overlook, to ignore; to let Kavanagh get down to the unhappy business of resettling himself in a respectable bachelor lifestyle. But he will not let us go. He drags it on, drags it out, his performance continues, days turn into weeks... he seems to be demanding our scorn, beseeching our contempt.

But now there are certain other matters which engage our attention. Matters of highest policy, matters deliberated at our lunchtime meetings, have suddenly become common knowledge, bruited about by bookkeepers and chainmen, discussed in the typing pool and the toolroom, the showers and the company buses. The Boss is grim and silent. And we begin, each of us, to worry a little. An unguarded word perhaps... our own subordinates, can we trust them? We have all, tempted by vanity, been guilty at times of minor indiscretions...

So we are worried. And cunningly, independent of each other, we begin to fly kites, to plant rumours, and to watch for the telltale traces to surface.

And soon we find that they are surfacing - all of them - in the Drawing Office. And that is Kavanagh's territory. Can Kavanagh be unburdening himself of our secrets to his junior staff, the draftsmen and file clerks? Surely, we tell ourselves, not even Kavanagh...

The answer is supplied, not by our espionage, but by the gossip of the bridge club. An early riser among the bridge players has seen a lady leaving Kavanagh's house in the dawn.

We speak discreetly to the Design Engineer, a neighbour of Kavanagh's, and the Design Engineer begins sitting up in his living room each night like a white hunter in a machan, waiting for the sun, and game.

In the end his patience is rewarded, and another part of the puzzle is solved.

Five-thirty on an early summer morning, and the back door of Kavanagh's par-bald brown dome protudes briefly, is withdrawn, and a lady slips out, scurries down the drive, trots away down the deserted street.

It is Vera, a clerk from the Drawing Office, a widow in her late thirties.

We are aghast, disgusted. Our grave deliberations, our weighty decisions, have been perverted by Kavanagh into the trivia of pillow talk. And with a subordinate. Now, now we are sure, Kavanagh must come finally to rest, be pinned by this ultimate indiscretion.

So again we wait. Wait for news to reach The Boss. In the meantime, we look more closely at Vera. She is a rather stringy blond with shifty brown eyes, an ingratiating but somehow intimidating smile. Personally, although she is not ugly, I find her repellent; but here connections with Kavanagh may have prejudiced me a little, I admit. Her daughter, just arrived from the city to join her, is an almost exact replica.

So we wait, and watch The Boss. The talk at our lunchtime meetings is a little more guarded. But not much so. The Boss has little use for circumlocutions, either he speaks out or is silent, and for our part we are sure that Kavanagh will not be with us for much longer.

So we wait, wait.

And nothing happens. Nothing. Nothing happens.

Or rather, something happens, but hardly what we have been expecting. For instead of sudden reprisals, the ignominious chopper, strange things begin to happen in the Drawing Office; small hints of new pressures, like ripples from a dropped pebble, start to undulate outward through the pond of Kavanagh's department. Hints are dropped, suggestions made, small sanctions invoked; directions are subtly changed, staff reorganised; favourites rewarded, enemies punished. Vera's favourites, Vera's enemies...

The clown is no longer a clown, it seems, but a puppet; God knows what strange rituals Kavanagh's bedroom has seen during the shortening nights...

Events seem to be moving with implacable inevitability. Vera admits coyly one day that she and Kavanagh are to be married. As soon as the legal arrangements are made...

There are sudden and massive realignments of allegiance in Kavanagh's department. A Department Head's mis-

The Chief Surveyor gets drunk at a party, gooses Vera, and is sacked.

trous is one thing, a wife another entirely. Vera, at the centre of it all, is smug. She no longer even pretends to work, but wanders idly about, hinting, planting suggestions, raising eyebrows...

And there is nothing we can do. The joke will never happen, he will never stop... We give up.

The Sales Manager decides to transfer, the Assistant Engineer resigns.

Kavanagh rips out a coffee machine from the workshop crib-room and plunges us into a three-week strike. He is not even reprimanded.

The Chief Surveyor gets drunk at a party, gooses Vera, and is sacked.

The Employment Officer exposes himself to the Post Mistress on the eighth green of the golf course, and enters a sanatorium.

Kavanagh stands for the local council, and is tipped for a shoo-in.

I think of resigning, but remember my superannuation.

The character, the whole structure, of our happy little company, our very lives, has changed. We are at the mercy of a fugitive from a Ben Turpin movie.

The summer sun mocks our desperation. What can we do? Nothing. Kavanagh, it seems, is impregnable.

But Kavanagh has never read the Greeks, has never heard, even, of hubris. And we are already in the process, although we do not know it, of being saved. And our salvation comes, not from intrigue or confrontation, but through the agency of the humble gonococcus, its fateful travel already begun.

The vector, as it were, of our salvation, is Kevin, The Boss's son; a large and precocious youth spending a year between high school and university as a tradesman's assistant.

I learn the news from my wife. She plays bridge with the Electrician's wife, who is a nurse and works for the local doctor. And the doctor, it seems, has been called upon to treat Kevin for a certain social complaint. In accordance with law, and his own curiosity, the doctor has identified the source of Kevin's tribulation. Who, but the daughter of Vera, recently arrived from the metropolitan world of vice and veneral afflictions?

The Boss, of course, knows. And still he is silent.

But the gonococcus has not yet completed its odyssey. Indeed, it has barely started.

For within a week the Electrician's wife reports that a further supply of penicillin has been broken out; and this times has to be pumped into the plump buttocks of Kavanagh himself. Under some pressure Kavanagh too has identified his contact. It seems that he has, oddly, an unexpected virtue; he is constant. His sole dalliance has been with Vera. The doctor, we learn, has quizzed the indignant Vera. She too insists that she has been - if not chaste - at least faithful. It must, she claims, have been a lavatory seat...

But the doctor is unconvinced. And it is a small town. The next time that Kevin is stretched prone the doctor, needle poised, interrogates him further. And the boy, uncertain, a little vain perhaps, admits it all: he has scooped the pool, enjoyed the daughter and aspired in due course to the mother.

There is now, of course, no question of secrecy; the word is out. Kevin finds himself suddenly and unexpectedly a hero. Vera is off work with influenza. Her daughter has departed once again for the city.

Kavanagh, cuckolded again, cuckolded by The Boss's own son, the gonococci swarming his thick veins, tries to bluff it out.

We laugh openly at him.

He blenches, but hangs on.

The Boss himself, with savage relish, laughs at him.

Kavanagh grits his teeth, the brown eyes seem to flicker at last with uncertainty. But still he will not give up.

A day passes, two, three. Is it possible that he can ride even the massive wave of our total derision?

It is Alfredo, the dwarfed and misanthropic cleaner, who breaks Kavanagh. Alone, heroically, he cuts the last thread that binds Kavanagh. Alone, heroically, he cuts the last thread that binds Kavanagh to the turning wheel.

The Production Engineer, always first at work, discovers it. He is waiting for me, leads me eagerly to the staff lavatories. There, on the door of the last cubicle, is nailed - nailed - a great yellow board lettered in contagious scarlet:

**RESERVE
FOR
MISTER KAVERNA
USE AT YOUR OWN RISK
SEAT TO BE STERILIZE DAILY**

There are no somersaults, no break-falls left. By lunchtime Kavanagh is gone, his office hurriedly cleared, his parking space empty. We never see him again. Alfredo is given generously of whiskey in The Boss's office, and a month's special paid leave.

The joke - at last, at last - has happened.

LAST LINE

by Robyn Davidson

What we need in this country (amongst many other things) is something irreverent and rude. Something to worry the ankles of the Big Folk. Basically, the trouble with much of the youth of today is that they've no disrespect for their elders.

They're becoming Charismatics and accountants and they're voting for Reagan. They admire our Prime Minister. They buy pig-skin brief cases in which to carry their economics lecture notes. They follow the Pope's edicts. They are young fogeys.

The very words Irreverence and Rudeness conjure up nostalgia for a time past – intensity, excitement, questioning, hope, innocence, bad but plentiful sex, and the easy living and fine economic weather which made it all possible. A time when ideas flitted like butterflies cross-pollinating cultural flowers.

And here we are, a decade on, supposedly reaping the benefits, but in fact, weeping from the spoils.

Suddenly, the notion that new ideas fertilize thought has turned flipside. In the 80's, if you listen to other ideas, you risk polluting your own. It's as if the Pope had outlawed the enjoyment of social intercourse as well.

Us sexually-liberated girls were required to put out for the Left and remember how we feared we were frigid if we didn't enjoy it.

World leaders are, as usual, getting away with murder.

We are bombarded daily with 'terrible news', into which we plunge our sentiments before changing the channel. We sacrifice nothing, yet feel we have done something by feeling, momentarily, bad. But where is the outrage that might lead to action? Split into a million ineffective filaments, frayed into the disarray of bickering factions, diluted by dangerous new-age philosophies.

Here in Australia, we have left the running of the joint to a consensus of crooks. Young fogeys reign supreme.

Where does all the energy for dissent go? Well, it goes into becoming one of Bhagwan's orange people, putting on rubber surgical gloves and denying the concept of privilege. It goes into owning your own life and pissing all over everyone else's, because after all, they Chose it. It goes into doing EST so that you don't have to feel guilty any more for being immoral. And when you extend these ideas out to global size, you find that the Third World somehow deserves what it gets, that we're not riding on their backs, that it's not true that we can lead the good life precisely because they can't, no, not at all. It's karma, man.

On the dangerous edge to New Age thinking, how I revel against it, though I hasten to add that I'm as flakey as the next person. I've had my horoscope done, I've been rolfed, I stand on my head, I squirt herbal tinctures down my throat, I subject myself to self-improvement too. It was with great relief that I left the tradition which required me to smoke and drink as much as possible; to wear a perpetual scowl and feel very negative, all the time, about the world, yet with monumental schizophrenia, believe that the world was being changed for the better by my efforts; which enjoyed argument rather than discussion; which constantly judged others, not by whether they were kind, or decent, but by whether they had 'good politics' or not. I remember well how people strutted their good politics like so much stuff. A marvellous defence, a perfect us, in a world of us and them.

Yet, many left these dogmas behind, to jump into new-age dogmas. And when these ideologies lead to a lack of analysis, when they disempower people by isolating them in little ponds where they think they are discovering things for the first time, when they divorce the individual from society and take individual endeavour out of its context of privilege or lack thereof. When they make people malleable, when they stifle questioning and discourage thought, it is time to shake healthy, sugar-free bodies till cavity-free teeth rattle, because what we are so desperately in need of at this moment, is good hard Thinking, *passee* though it may be.

Goodness, I had no idea I was so angry. I am running the risk of having tomatoes thrown at me by the crowds gathered around my soap-box. Well hell, I'm just owning my anger after all.

The sound which most characterizes this decade is that of a myriad babies going out with vast quantities of bath water. For example: Remember how, back when us sexually-liberated girls were required to put out for the Left, and remember how we feared we were frigid if we didn't enjoy it. Well, I read in the paper the other day that new studies from America, brought to us at vast expense, show that in fact these days, one in eight people enjoy sex too much. They are addicted to it. And that means folks, that a whole new set of industries can be set up to cure those one in eight, just as whole industries were set up to cure the opposite phenomenon just a decade ago. Yet precious few are saying "hang on a tic, I smell a rat."

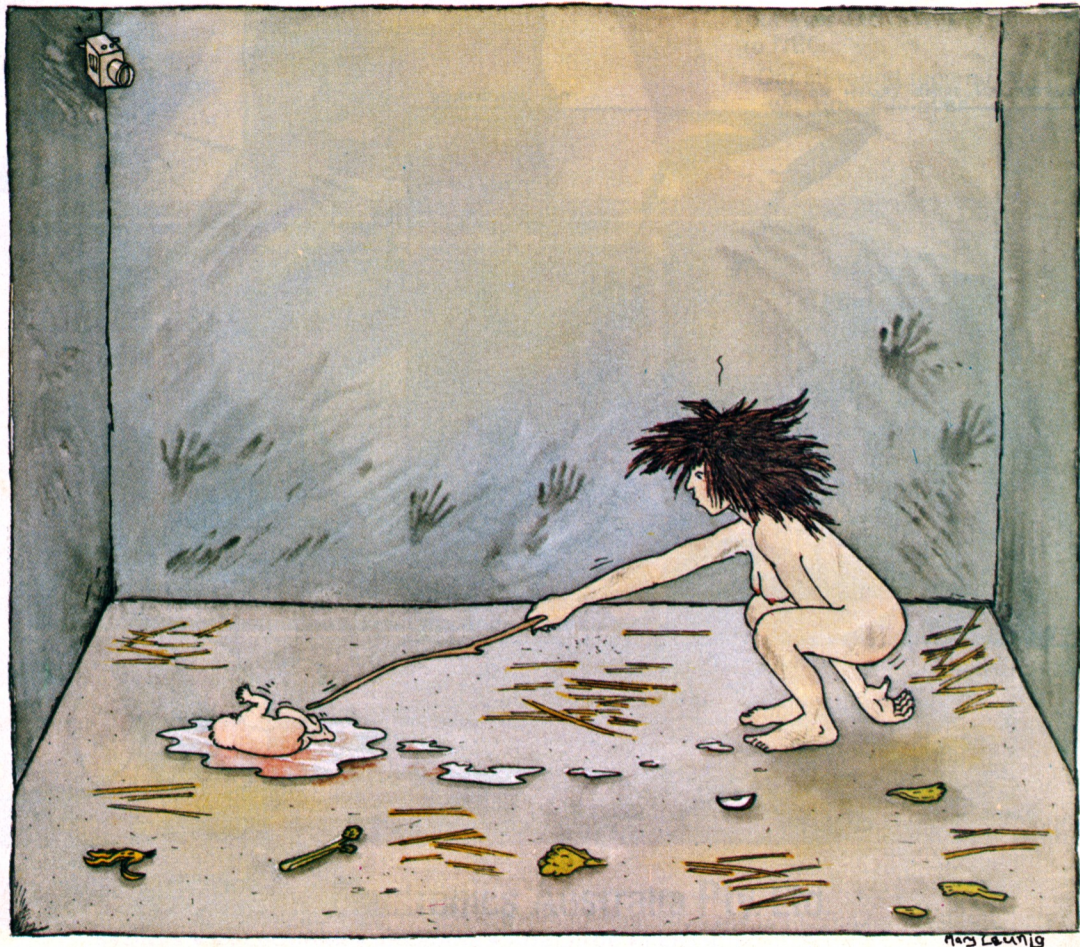
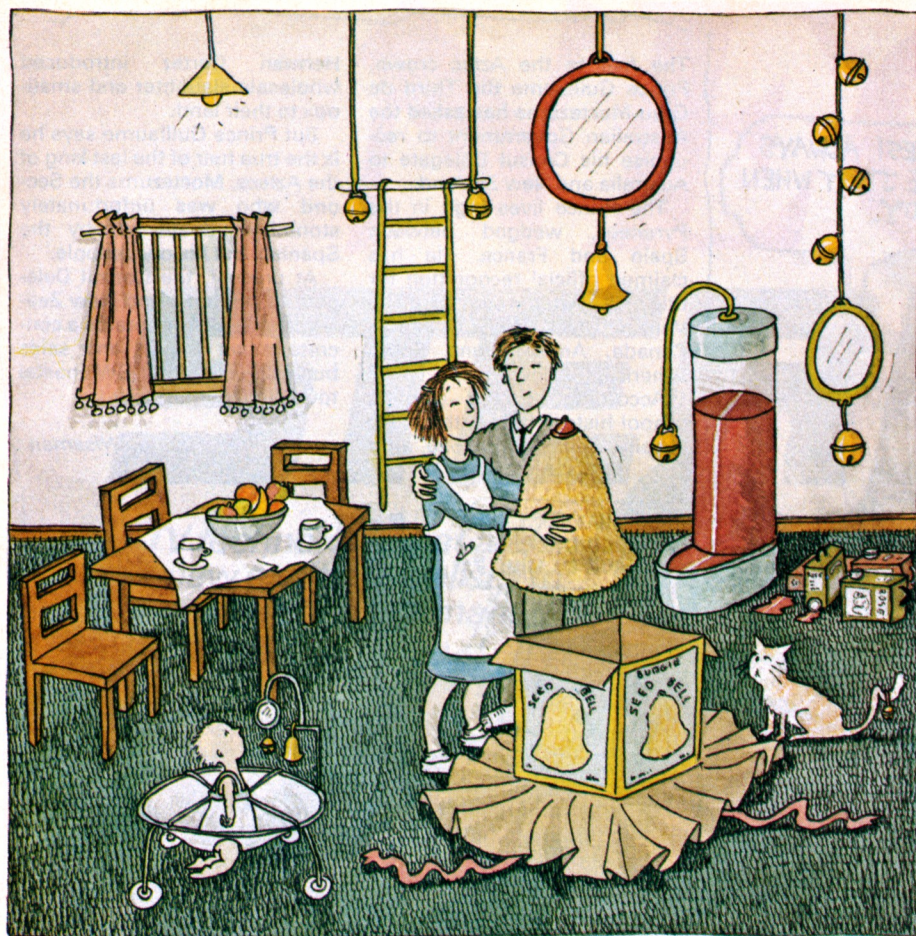
It is absolutely essential that what we so naively took for granted as how things should be in the previous decade, should be rigorously questioned and re-examined in this. But babies make a dreadful din as they disappear down plug-holes. And we must ask too why so many people are burying their heads in the sand; why they are retreating from the front lines and saying it was all pointless battle anyway; why they are deciding that freedom is too terrifying; why there is this slow slide into the trough of thoughtlessness.

Presumably, no-one wants to give up freedom, but it becomes a rather more complex decision, when the erosion of freedom is gradual. At what point does one try to stop the inconspicuous nibbling away of one's autonomy. At what point does one say, 'no, I want my freedom back, confusing and painful as it is'. As some wise soul said, 'There is no such thing as too much freedom, only too little courage'.

We need our collective moral courage back, in order to try to understand what is happening in the world, to strive to see what the patterns and connections of things are, and to challenge the prevailing stupidity of an era in which both Thatcher and Reagan have been re-elected.



Mary Leung





The heir to the Aztec crown, Prince Guillaume the Third de Grau-Moctezuma has asked the Australian Government to recognise his Consul Delegate to Australia and New Zealand.

The Prince lives high in the Pyrenees, wedged between Spain and France. He has claimed official recognition for title to the Aztec crown from The Vatican, UNO, UNESCO, Japan, Canada, America and South America.

According to the average school history books, the Aztec Empire finished in 1520 after

Herman Cortez introduced wholesale slaughter and small-pox to their land.

But Prince Guillaume says he is the true heir of the last king of the Aztecs, Moctezuma the Second who was unfortunately stoned to death not by the Spanish, but his own people.

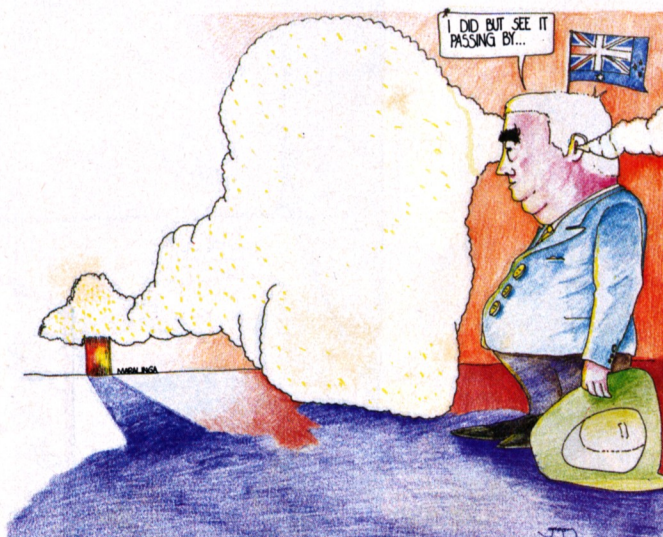
At present, the Consul Delegate to Australia and New Zealand, Peter Beck operates a concrete mixer import and sales business from the NSW coastal town of Batemans Bay.

by Eric Wiseman



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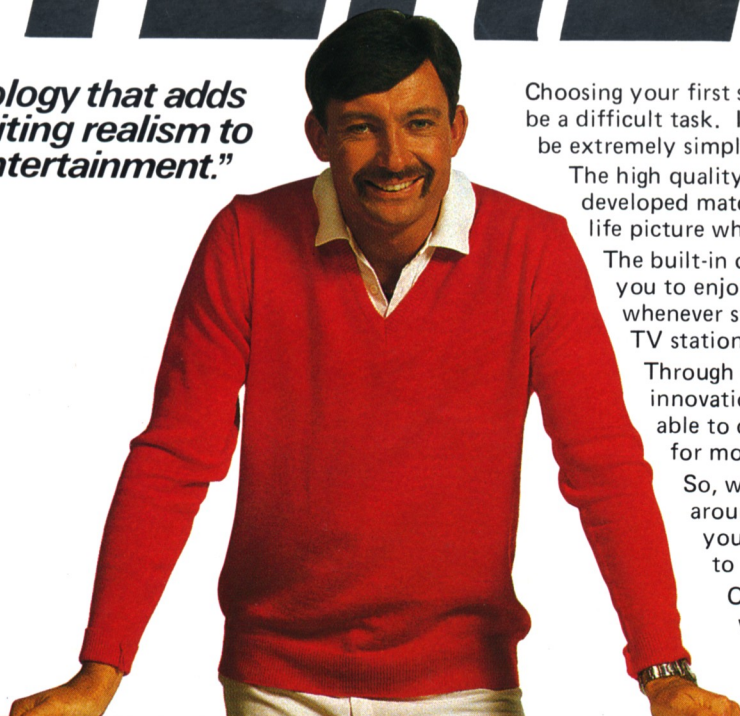
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